







THE TRAGEDY  
OF  
The Emperor Shah Jahan

by J. C. S.

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## **DEDICATION**

**MOTHER,**

A PICTURE IN THIS TRAGIC PAGE  
REVEALS THAT ROYAL LOVE THAT BUILT THE TAJ ;  
BUT NEITHER MARBLE NOR MAGNIFICENCE  
CAN TRULY CHANT THAT PASSION'S EXCELLENCE :  
THEN WHAT, THAT FILIAL PRIDE MAY REAR, SHALL PROVE  
THE GREATER MAJESTY OF THY PURE LOVE ?  
NOT FIFTY TAJ MAHALS ! NOR PEACOCK THRONE !  
YET, TAKE MY RHYME : IN THAT MY LOVE IS SHOWN.

## PROLOGUE

Stand ! An' you be foe to this ground, amend !  
Else, enter these marble palaces : pass, friend !  
Cæsar within—recumbent on his throne ;  
Crystal and gold, with a parrot above the crown,  
Mightily glaring, hatched in emerald ;  
But, still more wondrous, with proud jewels estrelled,  
A myriad gems, each darting a myriad beams,  
A peacock, perched astern, its tail flowing streams  
Of flashing colours, nigh alive, with strut and spread,  
(A touch, and it might toss its crested head !)—  
Cæsar, I say, welcomes each honest man :  
So enter, friend, to the Emperor Shah Jehan.

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

Selim, son of Akbar ; self-styled “ Jehanghir,” or “ Conqueror of the world,” Emperor of India.

Kushru, eldest son of Jehanghir (imprisoned for revolt).

Purvez, second son of Jehanghir, Viceroy of Burhanpore.

Shah Jehan, *alias* “ Khurrim,” third and ablest son of Jehanghir ; Commander of the Deccan, heir-apparent to the throne ; afterwards Emperor.

Shuriar, fourth son of Jehanghir ; favourite of the Empress Nur Jehan.

Dara, Secretary of State, designed  
for the throne by Shah Jehan

Shujah, Governor of Bengal

Aurangzebe, Commander of the Deccan

Murad, Commander of Guzerat

Dawir Buksh, son of Kushru.

Suliman, son of Dara.

Mohamed

Shah Alum

} Sons of Aurungzebe.

Asaf Khan, General, Prime Minister.

Mohabet Khan, General, Governor of Cabul.

Mukarib Khan, Viceroy of Cambay.

Eradut Khan

Abdullah

Shaista Khan

Raj Gopal Singh

Jeswant Singh

} Generals under Shah Jehan.

Lodi, a descendant of the Pathan dynasty, Governor of the Deccan, and later of Malwa.

Mohamed Aziz

Azmut

} Sons of Lodi.

Malik Amber, Chief of Amber.

Shivaji, a descendant of the House of Oodeypore ; founder of the Mahratta kingdom.

Sir Thomas Roe, English ambassador at the court of Jehanghir ; the Kings of Viziapore, Golconda, Bijapore ; the Nizam ; other Chiefs and Rajahs ; omrahs, lords, courtiers, generals, officers, attendants, ushers, musicians, spies, guards-of-honour, messengers, criers, mullahs, budmashes, jailors ; a posse of soldiers ; followers of Lodi ; the mob.

The Rajah of Bundelkhund's lawyer.

The Ghost of Akbar.

**DRAMATIS PERSONÆ—continued.**

Noor Jehan, favourite Queen of the Emperor Jehanghir.

Three other wives of the Emperor Jehanghir.

Arjumand Banu Begum, favourite Queen of the Emperor  
Shah Jehan.

Nur Nishan, wife of Prince Kushru.

Jehanara Begum, Princess Royal, daughter of Shah Jehan.

Jumna, Wazirajan, Abadie; Kenchenny girls at Jehanghir's  
Court.

Ladies, ladies-in-waiting, dancing girls, etc.

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**SCENES**

Ajmere, Burhanpore, Malwa, Lahore, Delhi, Agra.

## ACT I.

### SCENE I.—AJMERE

The Prime Minister's chamber in the palace of the Moghul Emperor.—Asaf Khan and Mukarib Khan in tete-a-tete. Their attendants around.

Mukarib Khan

So, then, your counsels have been urged in vain?

Asaf Khan

In vain!

Mukarib Khan

With a coach and pair and a case of champagne  
England's ambassador hath wormed, at last,  
Imperial favor! Is the *firman* passed?

Asaf Khan

It is so, in the Emperor's mind and heart.

Mukarib Khan

No more?

Asaf Khan

No more.

Mukarib Khan

Then must I hence depart

'Tis nigh the hour whereat our pompous King,  
In spangled robes, and many a royal thing,  
From out the palace casement, proudly sheds  
Upon the assemblage of his subjects' heads  
Below, the radiance of his Majesty.

I will intrude, beseech his amnesty,  
And broach and press this question with such force  
That he must rue his rashness in remorse.  
Heaven with strong passion Mukarib's soul imbue  
To war with English interests. Adieu! (*Exit with his attendants*).

Asaf Khan

To war, but not to prosper! 'Twas he, indeed,  
When Hawkins came before, to intercede  
For amicable commerce with our land,  
Formed a cabal, and wrenched the King's command

To cross him. The bogie ! What ill wind blows  
 With British courtesies ? In truth, who knows,  
 This mighty empire yet may, some day, need  
 The alliance of a foreign friend indeed !  
 The age is pitiful. There's something wrong  
 With politicians who tune each state song  
 To the accompaniment of morbid platitudes,  
 With fears and misconceptions as preludes,  
 And gross exaggerations and wild alarms  
 For their fit chorus. This is what most harms.  
 I'll humour them till all their gall is spent  
 Chiefly this Mukarib : time will change their bent.  
*Pirmans* may owe their eloquence to gems ;  
 But malice most doth mar great diadems.  
 The one is human : man's glory is in rank,  
 Man's chief ambition centred in his bank ;  
 The other's devilish, breeds sedition, strife,  
 And all backwardness, that sap an empire's life.  
 But truce, my tipsy thoughts ! My conscience, peace !  
 The prime minister must speak, and Asaf cease.

*Enter Usher.*

Who now ?

Usher.

My lord, a fair petitioner.

Prince Kushru's consort.

Asaf Khan

Again ? Welcome her.

*(Exit Usher : enter Nur Nishan, leading Dawir Buksh)*

Hail Princess, already half your plaint I knew.

Nur Nishan

I pray, my lord, deliver Prince Kushru.

In silence hath he sorrowed ten dark years :

His crime is cleansed with his repentant tears.

Asaf Khan

Lady, methinks, the ambitious Prince Kushru,

Sole author of his downfall and your woe,

Twice armed against his father and his king,

Both times defeated, once forgiven, to cling

To hope of second pardon hath no plea,  
 E'en if his prayers be breathed on bended knee.  
 Disorders hath he bred, such ravage done,  
 That cause for condonation I see none.  
 Blighting the peace of Delhi, with sword and fire  
 Strewing death and ruin at the heart of the empire,  
 And straining the suburbs to contribution,  
 How hath he not deserved Heaven's retribution !

Nur Nishan

O pity, lord, this widowed heart : so grieved,  
 Already now I seem a wretch bereaved.  
 O pity, lord, and by your favour may,  
 'Twixt justice and mercy, mercy outweigh (*weeps*).

Asaf Khan

How may God's gifts by human favours go ?  
 To favour favour ever was I slow.—  
 (*Aside*). Man's heart should freeze with such hypocrisy,  
 Did his brain not brand it man's diplomacy.—

Nur Nishan

O stay these streams, replenished with new rain,  
 That bound into the ocean of my pain !  
 Lord, look on this face, and let woe's language plead  
 The boon I beg to bless our bitterest need.

Asaf Khan

So like his father.

Nur Nishan

And yet unlike him. Sir,  
 The son's a prince : the father, a prisoner.  
 Free him, my lord.

Asaf Khan

I will, indeed, debate  
 How we may mitigate Kushru's self-fate.

Nur Nishan

Half all my hopes in Allah repose; in you  
 The other half. Adieu, my lord.

Asaf Khan

Adieu !

(*Exit Nur Nishan with Dawir Buksh*)

The germs of these divers affairs of state



So wear my vitals, my blood so impregnate.  
 Anent this rebel prince—it seemeth well  
 To liberate him from his prison-cell,  
 And charge him to one of his brothers. Thus,  
 His grief, not guilt, will be discharged by us.  
 Involved in high intrigues, onled to crime,  
 Eager to wear the crown before its prime,  
 He still had heart to lay no recreant hand  
 Upon his father, nor his blood demand.  
*(Re-enter Mukarib Khan and attendants.)*  
 Ho, Mukarib! How so speedily returned?  
 The Emperor, then, your suit hath speedily spurned?  
 Mukarib Khan

No.

Asaf Khan  
 What! Still hopeful?  
 Mukarib Khan

Asaf, Hope is dead.  
 Ere I could reach the King, this news I read.  
 Roe, late with the Emperor much engrossed,  
 Hath gained his cause, and all our purpose crossed.  
 Asaf Khan  
 Your countenance, at least, so much hath vouched.  
 'Tis as I thought. How was the letter couched?  
 Mukarib Khan

Alas, for this proud empire! Alas, for us!  
 In words most servile, and commencing thus:—  
 “Unto a King rightly descended from his ancestors,  
 bred in military affairs, and clothed in honour and  
 justice.”

With all my soul this impolitic act I hate!  
 Of what avail the minister of State?  
 On what account the senate? why, oh stars!  
 Our governors, commanders, subadars?  
 Or, why, at all, the empire, if the king  
 Our high-hatched counsels to the wild winds fling!  
 And is Moghul pride, too, dead! The same who cried  
 “Let the English come no more,” himself belied.  
 Jehanghir never was Jehanghir. No.

ACT I—SCENE I

Who "conquers worlds" that pawns his kingdom so!  
 Why need we paltry presents? Wealth have we  
 Enough to pave all India to the sea.  
 Why trade with foreign countries? We've our own.  
 What is the splendour of this kingdom, won  
 On Panipat's plain, beneath its blood-red skies,  
 By Baber and by Akbar! Yet we shroud our eyes  
 To all our pristine glory; and we bow,  
 And yield, and cringe to foreign princes now!

Asaf Khan

Were the King's concessions all the English sought?

Mukarib Khan

Well, they were but a moiety, cheaply bought;  
 Assuring them their trade in Indian seas,  
 And mingled with this fault some courtesies.

Asaf Khan

Then we lose nothing, they gain little: so  
 Give them both peace, England and Thomas Roe.  
 When journey you back to Cambay?

Mukarib Khan

E'en to-day.

Asaf Khan

You'll break bread with me ere you ride away.  
 Let's to the arena. 'Tis the hour of noon.

Mukarib Khan

To Jehanghir, inconstant as the moon!

*(Exit with attendants. Enter Sir Thomas Roe.  
 Roar of animals at the arena).*

Roe

Not here! To the arena doubtless gone.  
 No matter: he'll be at the Durbar anon.  
 Ah, what a kingdom's this! What jewels, what gold!  
 And yet, in faith and charity, how cold;  
 In manners, how quaint; in policy, how frail!  
 Were this a Christian power, how the earth should  
 quail!

But here the king is weak, the nobility sad,  
 The court in constant whisper, the peoples mad

'Mid noise and tumour, and lost in senseless rage.  
 A fee here opes the State's most secret page ;  
 And bulls, for balls, at tennis all may have,  
 To be tossed and censured by each sporting knave.  
 Jehanghir's disposition is so good  
 That every man may move his every mood ;  
 Which is worse than being ill. Therefore, I ween,  
 He's such a ready subject to his Queen.  
 I wonder who'll be crowned when he is gone ?  
 I hope not Khurrim, his high and haughty son.  
 He hath a flinty heart and a fiery head,  
 That keep both friend and foe in daily dread.  
 Yet is he heir in spite of Purvez's claim,  
 And Kushru's, whose proud spirit fetters now tame.  
 I pity this last : he is a noble lad.  
 And it pains me that I saw him grown so sad.  
 How shrank his face, how gasped his tortured breath,  
 To tell how his father racked his friends to death.  
 " Before mine eyes", he cried, " impaled ! O God !"  
 And no more spake, save to repeat, " O God !"  
 Sad runs the story of this land. But, I own,  
 In England's business some success hath shone.  
 The Moghul's letter to my sovereign  
 In spite of opposition I did win,  
 Though granting of his wishes but a sect,  
 Yet that in terms of honour and respect.  
 To gratulate this Asaf I wend me here :  
 He cooked it all for me, the wily dear !  
 A diplomatic knave, not quite above  
 A trifle, as a token, say, of love—  
 Id est " for value received ". Hullo, who's this ?

*Enter Usher*

(*Aside*).—So sweetly decked ! He doth deserve a kiss.—

Usher

My lord, three females—I beg pardon, Sir.  
 Methought you were my master, the minister.

Roe

(*Aside*).—Three females ! This must chance to be some  
 suit;

I'll try the game—Sirrah !

Usher.

Sirrah ?

Roe

(*Aside*)—

The brute !

There's spice in trials on the Jumna's banks,  
Where justice like an urchin plays great pranks,—  
I'll be the minister : bring in the case.

(*Dons some garments of Asaf's*).

Usher

You'll be the minister, with your Christian face,  
And I your servant ? Sir, I'll none of it.

Disrobe thee, pray, and my lord's chamber quit !

(*Aside*)—O patience.—Here, take this, and speak no  
word. (*Bribes him*).

My visitors send hither.

Usher

Well, my lord.

(*Aside*)—"Send hither", and yet "speak no word"! Alas !  
That's English : 'tis not Persian, but 'twill pass.

(*Pockets bribe and exit*).

Roe

The master and the servant so agree :

In both there's scarce the ghost of honesty.

Here lies the secret of all conquests ; so

Kings purchase kingdoms, souls hell, and pleasures woe.

Roe's visage is judicial, I confess :

Roe's wit not sober in this piquant dress.

*Enter Jumna and Abadie*

Wazirajan—Jumna and Abadie.

My lord, these women me have much defamed  
this woman we have not

Roe

You sing full sweetly, girls ! How are you named ?

Jumna

My lover calls me Jumna.

Abadie

Abadie

My mother dubbed me.

Roe

And your calamity ?

Wazirajan

Heaven willed that whom it named Wazirajan,  
Be mistress to an honourable man,  
The French physician, Bernard—(*laughter*).—I and he  
Are sweethearts. He proposed to marry me—(*laughter*).—

But my good mother refused him, strange to say  
(*laughter*).—

Now, Bernard, before the Emperor, one day,  
For learned cures his recompense asked to name,  
Forfeiting other gifts, myself did claim—(*laughter*).—

Roe

And pray, what had his majesty to say?

Wazirajan

“Upon his shoulder yonder woman lay,  
And let him bear her in ‘post-haste away!’—(*laughter*).—

Jumna and Abadie

And let him bear her in post-haste away!—(*laughter*).—

Wazirajan

All this, my lord, at the royal bidding done,  
Do I deserve this persecuting fun?  
Am I, my lord, in this to bear such blame,  
That my tormentors my virtue should defame?  
Myself and they do, each one equally,  
Contribute to this great court’s gaiety.  
Of them judge you—I’m a true Kenchenny.

Roe

A petty plaint! My mind’s eye fails to see  
A particle of criminality  
In your imagined grievance. Certainly,  
Had you the royal mandate but obeyed,  
On Bernard’s shoulders you having been laid,  
There he your burden ever so must bear.  
If you be, then, his mistress, you impair  
The letter and the strict locality  
Of the injunction.

Wazirajan

Is it not jealousy?

And spite, the child of jealousy?

Roe

They seem

Innocuous: them but womanly I deem.

Wazirajan

(*Aside*)—More Jewish judge, than Ind's prime minister:  
His verdict never was so sinister.

I'll sound the golden bells, ring my distress  
In the Emperor's ears, appeal and seek redress;  
Then back to Bernard—I thank, my lord.

Roe

Adieu!

Wazirajan

As you bear womanliness, I'll bear with you.

Adieu, my lord!

(*Exit*).

Roe

My pretty maid, adieu! —(*laughter*)—

Jumna and Abadie

My pretty maid—my pretty maid—Adieu!

Abadie

My lord, we love you for this from our core.

(*Advances to him*).

Roe

Stay! You love me for this, both? Pray, which loves  
more?

Jumna

Which you love more.

Roe

But neither more I love.

Abadie

Then neither loves you more.

(*Both hold him*).

Roe

Wantons remove.

I am not your prime minister of State (*Disrobes*).

Jumna

Too true!

Abadie

And better!

TRAGEDY OF THE EMPEROR SHAH JEHAN.

Jumna  
Love's a gentle fate.  
Abadie  
Life's dull without your amorous courtesy.

Roe  
England's ambassador am I.  
Jumna  
And I  
Your property.

Abadie  
And I, your tender slave.  
A loving English kiss from you I crave.  
Jumna  
In me take yours and cherish with love's care.  
Roe

So much undreamt-of fortune! Damsels fair,  
I have no doubt that your demands are just,  
And satisfy them sure, in honour, I must. (*They cling to him.*)

My goods, my agents tend. Take it not amiss.  
I'll send you a man from home. Here's the English  
kiss! [*Extricates himself, flies a kiss, and exits.*]  
Jumna

This is strange human nature! Hath he blood?  
Abadie

We'll after him, and alter his queer mood.  
Stop thief! Stop debtor! Ho, ho, run away!

Jumna  
Here, madman! murderer! ambassador! stay! [*Exeunt.*]

---

SCENE 2—AJMERE

Prince Shah Jehan's apartments in the palace.  
*Enter Shah Jehan and attendants. He signs to them.*  
*They pay their obeisance and retire.*

Shah Jehan  
How happy should a man be, being a prince!  
And yet, I am not happy. Unhappy prince!

The pride of race and youth sings in my blood;  
But still my soul desponds. Is there greater good?  
I know not. What may I want possessing health,  
And royalty, and power and pomp and wealth?  
I only know I prize not what I am.  
O mystery Fate, when Fortune so may damn!

*Enter Sir Thos. Roe.*

Roe

Good morning, prince! (*a pause*).

Shah Jehan

Why here to ruffle me?

Be brief, and leave me.

Roe

If so, instantly!

Your words besit nor prince nor ambassador.

Shah Jehan

If business brings you, wait there at the door  
Till dusk, or call to-morrow, when I deign  
To ride to court.

Roe

Prince!

Shah Jehan

Intruders court pain.

You may not see me now, nor prate: so, go!

Ha! That should deal your dignity a blow!

You said my pride may well teach Lucifer?

Roe

I'll not deny.

Shah Jehan

And what was Lucifer?

Roe

He was a cherub proud beyond compare,  
The son of morn, the highest in heaven, and fair,  
Who thought to usurp the Almighty's throne on high;  
Which same self-homage hurled him from the sky.

Shah Jehan

Seek you to flatter me, plain Englishman?



TRAGEDY OF THE EMPEROR SHAH JEHAN

Roe

Yea, if that prince's fate please Shah Jehan :  
It would not do our English royalty.

Shah Jehan

You mean to pledge my father's policy  
To advance your country: this should never be  
Were I my father. Yet beware of me.

Roe

When you are king, perhaps; so not yet, then?  
In England, princes condescend to men.  
I shall not tarry here to pocket taunts,  
And hark with patience to your princely vaunts.  
We are not slaves: yours I shall never be.  
So long as Britain is, Britons shall be free.  
I am the ambassador of England's King.  
I bid you good-day! (Exit).

Shah Jehan

Away! Poor wounded thing!

A second lesson, Roe hath from my pride:  
He'd turn a sage, did he here long abide.  
The first I still remember. It was thus:  
He crossed me at the court, and with much fuss  
Paid me his reverence, which I calmly took,  
Yet never returned, nor e'en my head so shook.  
How Mukarib Khan did laugh to see this jest!  
He is Roe's rooted enemy at best.  
Yet all is malice in him: not so in me.  
His hate's at heart, mine in my policy.  
The future! Lo, there's the secret of my woe!  
I'm weary of this present: it crawls too slow.  
But stay! How may that breed this fantasy?  
Diseased time were past human remedy.  
Ah, what a flaming fire is in this breast,  
That heats my heart to leaping unrepressed!  
It is not love, nor hope, nor fear, nor hate;  
Still of each something, like all passionate,  
What seeks my soul, ever, by night and day,  
With voiceless whispers, strangely to convey?

What duty's to fulfil, what wrong undo?  
Or who's to benefit, or suffer who?  
Speak to thy perturbed counterpart, soul, speak!  
If Right by Might's oppressed, I'll vengeance wreak.  
If conquest's to be made, or land restored,  
Remember the past of this great hand and sword.  
Ah! thus it ever mocked me—"prince!". One word,  
Strange message, big with meaning most absurd:  
No more than "prince"! Thus, "prince"!! Nay, "prince"!!!  
As if it were no honour to be a prince!  
Or being a prince, would it I were the king?  
Speak, soul. What, king? It speaks. It echoes, "king!"  
What's this! Am I not heir to the Peacock Throne?  
Will Jehanghir's crown not one day be mine own?  
Who dares the claim? Fit mettle's here to reign;  
For in this mind enveloped long have lain  
Fair schemes of conquest, cities yet to ground,  
And works of art, the wide world to confound!  
What vaunts this land's each hero, that's not in me?  
Has one a tittle of my chivalry?  
These spoils and trophies lend language to my claim:  
Deeds, not reports, are the rhetoric of fame.  
Disturbed Guzerat and Cabul, I quelled;  
The Deccan princes, too, who twice rebelled.  
When Purvez led his arms to Oodeypore,  
Wrecked in defeat and plunged in pools of gore,  
Straight was he replaced. Mohabet took command:  
But broken and ill, our troops would make no stand.  
And he, too, was recalled. Then sped this arm—  
Amid opposing fortunes retrieved our harm;  
Deep dashed into the ghats of the Deccan,  
And engaged the foe our terms of peace to reckon.  
'Twas thus, my sire, my valour tried in war,  
Made Khurrim "Shah Jehan"—"the world's emperor!"  
The King our haughty Queen obeys; I chafe  
To see him misruled, misled. I am not safe,  
Purvez in sway abroad; Kushru in thrall;  
Shuriar at home— I'll rivet mine eyes on all.

Who, but my brothers will dispute my claim!  
 Hark thee, my soul, this challenge I proclaim:  
 'Twixt me and my ambition, naught shall stand!  
 I'll smite impediments with vengeful hand—  
 I, who ne'er screwed a smile, nor shed a tear,  
 That mine iron heart and pride all men might fear!  
 Thunder less sure succeeds the heavens' lightning  
 Than I'll my father! Soul, I WILL BE KING!

*Enter Princess Arjumand and ladies-in-waiting.*

Arjumand

Why looks, my lord, so coldly on his wife  
 Who e'er was wont to illuminate her life?

Shah Jehan

I pray your sweet forgiveness, Arjumand.  
 I know not how, I'm no more Shah Jehan!

Arjumand

Indeed, my lord, you have of late in all  
 Seemed like some pauper steeped in sorrow's gall.  
 Am I in aught the breeder of your woe?  
 Oh, let my love avenge it, if I be so!

Shah Jehan

Ah! sweetest lady, o'er all your sex supreme,  
 You are no cause but the cure of all I seem.  
 The kingdom lustring in your beauteous face  
 Time may usurp, and pillage all its grace:  
 But the monarch of your beauty's realms, your soul,  
 Reigns like a sun, illumining the whole;  
 Spreading in golden space its radiant mirth,  
 And healing with its touch my heart-sick earth.  
 All virtues flourish in its proud empire,  
 And purge my humours with their purest fire.  
 Your presence is my cure: absent thy light,  
 The cause like a phantom rises in my night.

Arjumand

What is this grief that poisons your blood's joy,  
 Disfiguring you with the eruption of annoy?

Shah Jehan

I cannot longer bear this tongue-tied pain.  
 More than a woe whose colours a soul's peace stain,

It is. Some spirit haunts me night and day,  
 For good or ill—I know not which the way.  
 It rends the veiled future to my fore-sight,  
 Showing me less to please, and more to fright.  
 A moment will not picture me. Hence, my dear,  
 I'll open all my heart unto thine ear.  
 Allah's great bounty hath yet given me thee  
 That thy love's magic blight my misery.

[*Exeunt*].

*Drums and trumpets sound. Enter a messenger.*

Messenger

'Tis strange how men become invisible!  
 Not there, nor here, nor anywhere, and still  
 Breathing. Prince, prince, appear! No sign. And this  
 Marked "urgent". Ha, at last! Cupid! What bliss!  
 For ever making love! Oh, Shah Jehan,  
 You are the prince of lovers—hush!

*Re-enter Shah Jehan*

Shah Jehan

Go, man.

Reads:—"Proceed, my noble son to Burhanpore.  
 There Malik Amber hath put our arms in jeopardy;  
 and all our troops need instant reinforcements. By your  
 valour repair the fortunes of our empire. In this use  
 great dispatch. All is ready. Go."

"Repair the fortunes of our empire. Go."

Go, Shah Jehan, then, and crush the kingdom's foe:

But not alone. Kushru must follow thee.

What though he is in chains for mutiny,

His primogeniture is a danger still.

Be ruled, my soul. Again! What now, kill, kill?

Murder my brother! Purvez stays abroad,

He too's my elder. Kill! What, murder both? God! God!

Then why not Shuriar also? Then I'm free,

And none remain to mar my royalty.

O, hellish Crime! How many irons you heat

To sear man's lives ere one small gain's complete!

I am no ghoul—no villain inured to shame;

Nor's butchery my bloody passion's name;

Mine is a warfare against mine enemies—  
 My life's security in their death lies.  
 I cannot slay them all. I may not so  
 Drown all the kingdom in one well of woe.  
 Time and occasion must supply my prey,  
 And through one act another tread its way.  
 Nay, let one certain blow this time suffice—  
 Fall Kushru, moiety of my fortune's price! [*E. it*]

SCENE 3.—BUCHANPORE.

Prince Shah Jehan's apartments in camp: the confusion  
 of a field day, guns sounding at intervals.

*Enter Shah Jehan.*

Shah Jehan

This gory blade hath routed Amber, and I  
 Full soon shall hear the voice of victory.

*Enter two budmashes disguised*

Stand forth! Appear genteel, as courtiers may,  
 And not the villians ye are. Stand forth, I say!  
 This is a business not for clumsy fools,  
 Who find their betters in the hair-brained mules,  
 But men—men cursed with wits to suit their parts.  
 Stand! Hide sternness in your stony hearts!  
 Look sweet; be courteous. Know ye, what's to do?

1st Budmash

Your royal highness, 'tis to kill Kushru.

Shah Jehan

Blunt, blatant butcher! So it is. Say how?

2nd Budmash

Faith, Prince, we'll do it with no courtly bow—

Shah Jehan

Withhold! I'll have no antics, ape, do you hear?

2nd Budmash

So craves your pardon, your humble courtier! [*Kneels*],

1st Budmash

It will be done, both prompt and secret—thus!  
 Your royal highness, trust it all to us.

Shah Jehan

I'll trust none more than villains for villainy.  
Remember your reward!

2nd Budmash

A princely fee!

Shah Jehan

The night is black to daub your purple deed.  
No scruples let your careful hands impede.

*Enter Kushru guarded.*

Shah Jehan

Still plunged in sadness, brother? You treat us ill,  
Whose love our aching heart doth cherish still.  
Be kind to us. In all we trust this change  
Leaves you less unhappy in your prison range.  
We would dismiss these guards—*[exeunt guards]*—  
and in their place  
Lay at your service these courtiers of grace,  
As more befitting a prince.

1st Budmash

Hail, Prince!

2nd Budmash

Hail, Prince!

Kushru

My thanks, my heart to a brother's mind convince.

Shah Jehan

Be each of you to our brother, your prince, a friend.

2nd Budmash

We have, indeed, sworn so to be.—

1st Budmash

To the end.

Shah Jehan

And mark you further this, most sweet Kushru!  
Now Malik Amber falls, or he must sue. *[Guns]*  
Mine arm, that moulded this proud victory,  
Shall break the chains of your captivity

For ever ! Uncertain is life, but this most sure  
All Kushru's sorrows Shah Jehan shall cure!

Kushru

My brother, grief hath made my tongue of lead.  
I cannot speak, yet feel I live, though dead.  
My thanks. Say, if you will, your further pleasure.

Shah Jehan

Your freedom, Kushru, is my joy's full measure.

Kushru

So, then, adieu ! You follow ?

1st and 2nd Budmashes.

We do.

Shah Jehan

Adieu !

*[Exeunt Kushru and budmashes]*

Adieu, Adieu, Kushru ! For ever, adieu !,  
The thought that you must die, inspired my blade  
Against yon throats that bleeding low I laid.  
Their guns are dumb; their terror dares not speak,  
For Malik Amber knows what vengeance I wreak!

*Enter generals*

Generals

Hail !

1st General

Hail, your royal highness ! Victory !  
The day is yours: long live His Majesty;

2nd General

Ever friends were Shah Jehan and victory.

3rd General

To-morrow Amber comes to bow to thee.

Shah Jehan

To-morrow homeward march the troops, Go, you!  
I pray you, leave me now. Adieu, adieu!

*[Generals salute and retire]*

Impetuous soul, when shall your tyranny cease.  
And free me, now your slave, to live in peace!  
Command no more, my proud unbridled will,  
I cannot murder, murder, murder still!

Yet all is not achieved in Kushru's death:  
My father rules; Purvez and Shuriar draw breath.  
Accursed is he whose fortune is to wait;  
Blest would I be, could I foresee my fate!

[*Enter Purvez with his courtiers, who retire.*]

Purvez

Ho, Shah Jehan! By victory made sad?  
I scarce need envy you the glory you've had.

Shah Jehan

Ah! Purvez, wars are ever known to tire:  
They leave us breathless though we win an empire.  
How goes the rule of Burhanpore with you?

Purvez

My cares are many here, my comforts few;  
Yet am I pleased with all.

Shah Jehan

Contented prince!

Purvez

But for these riots I love to rule this province,

Shah Jehan

Yet not so much as to hate yourself if king!

Purvez

Nay, brother, mutiny is not of my liking,  
Our father loves not a rebellious son:  
Bethink you how poor Kushru was undone.

[*Shrieks without.*]

Heavens! what may this unearthly elegy be  
That freezes the air with its sharp agony?

[*Shouts of "murder."*]

Shah Jehan

Murder! What murder? [*More shouts.*]

Purvez

Whose, by whom, where, when, how?

*Enter Nur Nishan.*

Nur Nishan

Murder! O, murder!

Shah Jehan

Princess, speak patiently now.



Nur Nishan

O, princes, Kushru is no more, no more!

Purvez

Kushru!

Shah Jehan

Murdered!

Purvez

We feel this from our core.

Nur Nishan

Kushru is cold, the innocent and good!

His lifeless corpse floats in a river of blood.

Accursed Fate that follows where we wend!

Accursed star that stings who least offend!

Purvez

How murdered?

Shah Jehan

By whom?

Purvez

Fair sister, speak.

Nur Nishan

O, if I knew, I'd not stand by so meek.

What nameless tortures would I not inflict

Were he 'fore me whom this deed could convict!

Murdered—poor Kushru! Innocent Kushru!

Without a cause or fault—beloved Kushru!

Purvez

Nay, sister, stay your grief!

Shah Jehan

And tell us all.

Nur Nishan

Then help me words with your most tragic pall—

In vain! what can I say? This—that, in his tent,

He and the courtiers that your highness sent

Stood so conversing. I in my chamber lay,

When suddenly he screamed; I ran his way;

But ere I gained his side, he sank in death.

I shrieked, I swooned. Recovering thought and breath,

I found his courtiers by. O, dreadful day!

Shah Jehan

And knew not they what happened—what did they say?

Nur Nishan

But that they left him for a while alone,  
Heard his death-cry, returned—then all was done!

Shah Jehan

They're honest men; and with their help we trust  
To track the hell hounds, till they bite the dust.

Nur Nishan

O, Shah Jehan! But Kushru is dead—dead!  
O deadly days when I was born, reared, wed!

Purvez

My deepest sorrow may my silence express:  
I only feel what language may not dress!

Shah Jehan

Ay, let us to the scene of this dread woe  
That kisses the blood of hapless Prince Kushru;  
Then with all honour bear this burden sad  
To a fit resting place at Allahabad.

Nur Nishan

O torrent tears, absorb me!

Shah Jehan

Princess, be still!

Nur Nishan

O cruel grief destroy me! Kill me, kill! (*Exeunt*)

SCENE 4.—AGRA

The Emperor's Drawing-room in the Palace. Music,  
wine and all pomp and splendour

*Enter Jehanghir, Asaf Khan, Sir Thos. Roe, lords,  
nobles, guards-of-honour, &c.*

Jehanghir

Illustrious son of England, India's friend!  
We much bemoan your sojourn's speedy end.  
In all, we hope, you look on us with eyes  
Of love and kindness. Prosper our countries' ties!

Roe

I thank you, proudest monarch of the East,  
For your royal friendship's every favour and feast.

My king shall know what honour and courtesy  
His servant had from India's majesty !

Jehanghir

Now let this wine pledge our sincerity.  
All fortune light on Roe and Roe's country !

Roe

And blessings on you and your empery !  
May ever your kingdom flourish in harmony !

Asaf Khan

Here's to our Emperor and to England's King !

Lords, etc

Years to the Emperor ! Long live England's King !

Asaf Khan

A lusty cheer for Jehanghir and James !

Lords, etc

Hurrah, hurrah, for Jehanghir and James !

Roe

Ere I may beg your leave, once more my thanks:  
To the Emperor, to Asaf, to all, my thanks.  
O, that the lustre of this vast empire  
Lamp sky and sea with its bejewelled fire  
For ever—that each radiating beam  
Shed peace around. content and joy supreme,  
And to all the living land from end to end,  
Its glory and its greatness proudly lend !  
So like a verdant emerald, India, shine,  
Set in thine ocean, by the Hand divine !  
I will bespeak the grandeur of this court,  
High entertainments, pomp, and lavish sport,  
This regal splendour and magnificence,  
To all my country.

Jehanghir

For this our thanks immense !

Roe

Good-bye, land of diamonds, pearls and rubies !  
Ever as now be thy felicities !

In duty and reverence, most royal, adieu !

Jehanghir

Adieu !

Roe  
To all adieu !

All

And you!

Roe

Adieu !

*(Exit with guard-of-honour).*

Jehanghir

In this new business, Asaf, our Queen desires  
To embark Prince Shah Jehan.

Asaf Khan

She so requires:

So I, and all our lords, that choice approve.

Jehanghir

But goes with it, think you, our son's free love ?

Asaf Khan

When last the Prince was bid to Burhanpore,  
He bore unhappy Kushru to the war :  
And Kushru died !

Jehanghir

Died ! Therein lies my fear :

He may impose new terms.

Asaf Khan

Which we may hear,

And when considered grant or disallow  
As fits our prudence. Lo, he comes e'en now !

*Enter Shah Jehan*

Jehanghir

Most welcome, son ! We wait, indeed, for you !

Shah Jehan

My love and duty, sire, are e'er your due !

Jehanghir

You may employ them now with honour and grace.

Shah Jehan

Where justice is, those virtues have their place.

Jehanghir

The empire hath occasion to wage new war :

Receive our trust and speed to Candahar.

You know the cause—how Persia, in her pride,

Spreads discontent and danger far and wide,  
 Vaunting our dispossession of the land  
 Our father won, by Abbas. Take command,  
 Require our re-possession, but this denied  
 Claim with your guns and no other terms abide.

Shah Jehan

If well, I must obey, and so shall hence.  
 Persia's own blood our injury shall cleanse !

Jehanghir

Sweet sentiment shed from a princely heart !  
 Valour is Shah Jehan's most sterling part.  
 We have, indeed, remembrance of what was,  
 When with your sword you held our Dec'an cause,  
 And triumphed proudly where our strength most failed,  
 Till Malik Amber in his armour quailed !  
 Go, therefore, to like glory ; march to Fame,  
 And bring with you a more victorious name !

Shah Jehan.

I bow to a father's praise. I will away,  
 To gather all my forces and move to-day. (*Exit*).

Jehanghir

A joyful issue. We did the Prince much wrong,  
 Whose mind with ours went arm in arm along.

Asaf Khan

I think his manner strange, your Majesty !  
 He ne'er was so submissive as he seems to be.

Jehanghir.

His manner strange, and seeming ? Nay, Asaf, nay !  
 We know our son too well.

Asaf Khan.

So I hope, I may.

Jehanghir.

I read his looks, as I could read a page.

Asaf Khan

Heaven grant your Majesty's view as true as kind,  
 And circumstance reprove our erring mind !

Jehanghir.

Ho, lords and noblemen, these pleasures stay :  
 Our ladies clamour for our courtesy's pay.

Asaf, we trust this to your prudent hands :  
Persia must yield to us our just demands. (*Exeunt*).

*Re-enter Shah Jehan*

Shah Jehan.

Gone from these pleasures to the joys of love,  
Undreaming what sore thoughts my spirit move !  
I do not like this kindness that sends me so  
To all the extremities of the earth. No ! No !  
There is some malice in its meaning, I confess ;  
Some rancour of the Queen's in friendly dress.  
She is not half so much, as once, my friend :  
Her thoughts to Shuridar now all strangely tend.  
And yet, why strangely ? Shuridar's her own son.  
Shuridar must wish me distant and undone.  
I may not take him with me, like Kushru,  
Or else he'd be with him with less ado !  
Methought the eldest son might play the heir ;  
But now I see the youngest is a fear.  
He shall repent for this, and many more !  
My tusked revenge is deadlier than the boar !  
Remember, Shah Jehan, the oath you made !  
You *shall* be king, or in the dust be laid ! (*Exit*).

SCENE 5.—AGRA

Prince Shuridar's apartments in the palace.

*Enter Empress Nur Jehan and Shuridar (with ladies-in-waiting and courtiers, who retire).*

Shuridar

Mother, I fear these fateful times.

Nur Jehan

Your fear

Implies your doubt of me.

Shuridar

You are too dear

To doubt, mother. I fear against my will,  
The present augurs some impending ill.  
The king, advanced in years, in danger lies,  
While Purvez swift to court with winged haste flies ;

Nur Jehan

And seared with our anger back home he hies.

Shuriar

Pride chastised swells its hatred to the skies.

Nur Jehan

His strength pitted 'gainst yours is but an ace.

Shuriar

Still, Shah Jehan, with much command and grace,  
And able parts and power, hath senior claim—

Nur Jehan

Which is so shaken with his present shame,  
It hath no legs to stand.

Shuriar

What shame, my mother?

Nur Jehan

The fell and fulsome murder of your brother?  
Who but Khurrim, the enemy of his years  
Would Kushru's death?

Shuriar

This doubles all my fears!

I seem to view disaster in the air,  
Where the "sisters" flit, weaving each human care.

Nur Jehan

Fear less and hope more; for let Shah Jehan  
Move Hell and Earth to favour him if he can,  
We are your opposition: King and Queen  
Alike befriend you.

Shuriar

For this, I ween,

Goes Shah Jehan by your command to war,  
From Persia's grasp to recover Candahar.

Nur Jehan

I trust his absence means your fortune.

Enter a Courtier.

Shuriar

Sir,

Your face bespeaks ill-tidings, I aver.

Nur Jehan

Speak!

Courtier

Hail! Alas, too true, your majesty!

The Prince, late parted, seeks security  
Ere he advance. At Mandu his troops are stayed,  
By cheats of health and weather there delayed.  
The Emperor in haste doth ask for you  
In his alarms your counsel to pursue,  
On instant private conference.

Nur Jehan

Begone, (*Exit Courtier*).

And say we'll wait upon his pleasure.

Son,

I will away : your presage ne'er more true.  
We must to war, and with red blood undo  
Your brother's stubbornness. Upon the rock  
Of his rebellion he his claims doth shock  
In fatal wreckage. Base, impudent knave!  
He seeks a sceptre that he ne'er will have.  
We doubt your uncle : to seal the rebel's fall,  
Mohabet from Cabul we will recall,  
Upraising him to honours new and high,  
And promising fresh favours. So, goodbye! (*Exit*).

Shuriar

Goodbye! Now is my chance: now Mars be kind,  
And will me the crown my father leaves behind! (*Exit*).

Enter 2nd Courtier

Courtier

The headless bodies of our Emperor's fears  
Run on the hired legs of his courtiers.  
One pair flies first with the burden of its whim,  
While his twin brother hastes to o'er take him.  
Doubtless her majesty, the Queen is now  
On the royal chamber's threshold, I avow.  
This mischief'll have a family of issues,  
Each new-born stripling strong in all its tissues.

*Enter Jumna and Abadie*

(*Aside*). Ha! Here's a change of tune for relaxation.  
My pretty maids, what means your visitation  
To the Prince's chamber?



Jumna

What yours, courtier?

Courtier

No more nor less than the Emperor's desire.

Jumna

So ours our own.

Courtier

The Prince hath lately married.

Abadie

And you?

Courtier

Not quite.

Abadie

Pray wherefore have you tarried?

Courtier

Because I missed the Queen.

Jumna

The Queen!

Abadie

You!

Courtier

I.

The King desired her most speedily:

But though I ran after yet have I missed her,

And now have found you both.

Jumna

And we, you, Sir.

Abadie

Sir, we are weighed with trouble.

Courtier

Which I'll uplift.

Abadie

Thanks.

Jumna

Thanks.

Abadie

I need a loan.

Jumna

I seek a gift.

They're yours.  
Courtier

Abadie  
Pray count me several kisses.  
Courtier

There!

Yet more.  
Abadie

Courtier  
There, there! Return with interest fair.  
Abadie

You are too kind.

Jumna  
Give me your lips.  
Courtier

Pray take.

Again.  
Jumna

Courtier  
Well. Now pay the loan and gift.  
Abadie

You make

A mockery of us.

Jumna  
You did not give.  
Courtier

Why, sure I gave you my lips as I live!

Jumna  
Why, sure as you live, you have your lips still.  
Courtier

Then pay the loan.

Abadie  
I'll borrow, then I will,  
Courtier

You've taken me in, sweet ladies.  
Jumna

O, for shame!

We only took your kisses out.

Abadie

To blame

Is most unworthy of a courtier.

Courtier

Perhaps you'll be more courtly to a worthier.

I'll take your leave.

Jumna

And give us your leave, pray.

Abadie

Exchanging leaves, we'll both go the same way.

*(Exeunt, the courtier being indemnified).*

*Re-enter Shuriar with attendants, who retire.*

Shuriar

Ah me! Now midway betwixt woes and joys,  
That, late, beneath the Damoclean poise  
Of Fear's unnumbered swords, edging their plunge,  
Sat trembling, there transfixed with awe's swift lunge,  
My soul is tossed; joying, yet fearing more,  
As in a tempest, between sea and shore.  
The rain of my mother's influence and power  
Though both poured once on Shah Jehan their shower,  
Waters my soul's ambition; and the flood,  
Uprooting woe, bids joy put forth her bud:  
But winds arise around that flowering stem,  
And like seducers steal its virgin gem.  
So am I rocked from rest to ruin; in pain  
More than in peace, wrecking more than I gain.  
The king, like Asaf, is her plaything. They,  
In all, her wishes and her whims obey.  
Solely in this my hope's salvation lies,  
For Nur Jehan's fierce mood no man defies.  
And what, then, is that hope that costs such woe?  
'Tis to be planted on the throne to grow,  
And what a throne, shedding what wondrous flame!  
The "Peacock's" my hope, and all its fragrant fame.  
These countless millions would I rule so throned;  
This jewelled sceptre sway, and be renowned;  
A period the cynosure of eyes;  
In History's page among sovereign majesties;  
Jewelled myself, from head to foot all royal,  
In glory garbed—the millions bending loyal,

In this wide realm, unto my yoke of pride.  
That summit reached, then reckless if I died !

*Enter a courtier, paying obeisance.*

What hap ?

Courtier

Your royal highness, most alarming news !  
Prince Shah Jehan doth protest and refuse  
To yield his officers, answering thus :—  
“ I’d wait upon the king.”

Shuriar

What word from us ?

Courtier

That, minus all the power he possessed,  
Him, he is independence having confessed,  
At once back to the Deccan we remand.

Shuriar

And he’ll not bide the imperial command ?

Courtier

The whisper’s that he spurns our threats in all,  
For which our trumpets blare the battle-call.

Shuriar

Thanks for these tidings. Go ! (*Exit courtier.*)

Thus far ’tis well.

My further fortune the tongue of war shall tell.  
Prizing this empire, coveting this crown,  
I pray thee, Planet, weigh Shah Jehan down ! (*Exit.*)

ACT II.

SCENE I.—LAHORE.

The Emperor’s Harem. Nur Jehan discovered, smoking a golden-tubed hookah, whose mouthpiece is studded with gems, and reclining on a richly embroidered Persian carpet: the other wives of the Emperor about her, attending—the whole atmosphere pervaded with the perfumes of Arabia and every Asiatic softness and luxury.

Nur Jehan

The Emperor intends a visit

1st Wife

Ah!

Ah, Love! That's more to you than us.

2nd Wife

Ah!

3rd Wife

Ah!

1st Wife

We wither away untended while you bloom;  
Yet joy, in that you prosper, lights our gloom.

Nur Jehan

Why wither? That word your beauty doth belie  
You only droop. Is it not Destiny  
That in the universe suns set, stars rise?  
Countless ambitions strain towards the skies.  
Prosperity moves in turns. To-day in me,  
To-morrow you—so favours live and die.  
Ourselves revolve, both all our pain and pride:  
Then let me live my moment Fortune's bride!

1st Wife

I may not hope so long as last your charms;  
And when those fade, I'll rest in Death's cold arms.

2nd Wife

My very fate, though Ray Singh's daughter I.

3rd Wife

And mine, heiress of Bhugwandas.

Nur Jehan.

Fie, Fie!

What profits birth, if not the soul be great!  
Child of the desert, in a serpent's folds my fate,  
By accident redeemed, on bounty bred,  
And for mere gifts of Nature, crowned my head,  
I was not judged by birth. And was this, pray,  
At once, the marvel of a mighty day?  
'Twas by promotion. Why, have you forgot  
The four bleak years I lay here in sad lot,  
Numbed with neglect, and no smile from my lord?  
Then lyrical sang your love to Badian's chod,

All in its summer : then my day to rail.  
With what brave arts love next did I assail !

1st Wife

Embroideries richer than all Cashmere ;

2nd Wife

Brocades than Bagdad ; perfumes without peer ;

3rd Wife

Labours that shamed a kingdom's industry.

1st Wife

Not all Bokhara's golden treasury,  
Nor Samarcand's most priceless jewellery,  
Will now outweigh virtue's reward to thee.

Nur Jehan

So, then, by slow ascent uprose my fame.  
Unnoticed, bidding for a better name :  
First "Nur Mahal," then "Nur Jehan," now "Shahe"—  
This harem since a court of royalty ;  
And the barren, stony, desert changed in time  
To a joyous fertile kingdom in its prime !

Enter Jehanghir.

Jehanghir

Hail, ladies ! Hail, arch-politician.  
Empress, parliament, and magician !  
Now lights Heaven's chastisement on Khurrim's crimes,  
And groans the air in the night of these dread times !  
His madness may not last while news on news  
Proclaim how much his fate be hourly rues.  
Our dally victories, his own defeats,  
Spiced with Mohabet Khan's most valourous feats,  
Have raised our drooping spirits and eased our breath ;  
But still, dear Queen, our thoughts foreshadow death !  
This bounding asthma wearies us and wears.

Nur Jehan

I grieve to hear who halve Jehanghir's cares.  
Yet be content, and hope but for the best.  
All should improve with needful change and rest.  
Let us to Cashmere.

Jehanghir

Let the Court prepare :  
Our sinews languish for healthful repair.

Nur Jehan

Asaf shall steer each business of the state.  
We'll move at once.

Jehanghir

Yourself hath fixed the date.

Beloved, whose conquest cost us blood and war,  
Rule India still though I be Emperor.  
Love such may make an empire or may mar,  
But ever triumphs where its wishes are.

Nur Jehan

How else could Jehanghir justify his love,  
Or Nur Jehan to him her passion prove !  
Was't not for beauty and intelligence  
You invoked the goddess' omnipotence  
To burst the iron bonds two souls had clenched,  
Till each from each with might and main were wrenched ?  
Love bowed you to opposing Akbar's will  
Only to make her triumph greater still;  
And when your father's brow exhaled Death's dews,  
Love tinged your thoughts with love's strategic hues.  
So soon in combat lion and tiger quailed  
Before the Turkoman, till in death they wailed,  
Love steeped her hand in crime: yet Love was crossed—  
Two score assassins in shameful rout were lost.  
The grim gore-spotted Shere Afghan still lived :  
The prize unwon, an Emperor still grieved!  
Then last of all an army Love levied;  
My husband fell, and Nur Jehan was freed !  
The proud Apollo whose prowess filled book and song,  
Passed through the grave to the dead heroes' throng.

Nur Jehan

I know Jehanghir's power denies me naught :  
All hath it granted that my prayers e'er sought;  
Yet nothing shall I beg, but brings with it good.  
The price be what it may, e'en war and blood.

Mohabet is a danger in disguise :  
Imprison him.

Jehanghir.

Imprison ! The traitor dies !

But he ! Mohabet, who now hath taught in war  
Obedience to the son of his Emperor !  
Who late in Guzerat, Deccan and Bengal,  
Smote all his armies till tottering they fall !

Nur Jehan.

The same. For, with the power he now commands,  
He hopes to crown himself with his own hands.  
He is ambitious far beyond my words;  
His valour claims the realm with rebel swords.  
Being a like soldier and dissembler, he  
Aspires as did that Roman devil, Pompey.

Jehanghir.

O, demon Treason that paints men loyal and true !  
Mohabet, could we dream that this were you !  
Queen, we'll abide your counsel : be it so.  
We will recall this traitor to feel our blow.  
Lest he surmise what way our thoughts do tend,  
The summons shall be kind, though not its end.  
What, are there cankers eating at the root  
Of all our royalty, and are we mute?  
Our son and subject plant them there to grow,  
And do we suffer in silence and sorrow ?  
Mohabet shall not live to rue this deed,  
Nor Shah Jehan—but he's our blood and breed.

Nur Jehan

To their own use men bend authority;  
A prince's power and popularity  
May change the peoples into living tools.  
Trapped in deceit to trust such were we fools.  
Victory puffs one; defeats the other chafe;  
The end of both dominion, are we safe?  
Khurrim need not die, but must be made to yield.

Jehanghir

He ne'er will yield : his fortune's in the field.  
Recall the reason of his stubbornness,  
When Shuridar first fell in our royal caress.



His divination was exact, though pert, in this;  
 For now the crown is Shuridar's, not his.  
 The fault's in us that he is wilful grown,  
 Who e'er was as our heir-apparent known.

Nur Jehan

Nay, dear Jehanghir, do not crush his blame;  
 For truth, though coloured, yet survives the same.  
 Sons owe obedience to their parents in all;  
 And from their favour, proud sons deserve to fall.  
 Take the case, my lord, how Purvez proves a son,  
 Whose claim to the throne on horseback once did run.  
 We chid him; he returned, and ever since  
 His temper made a better son and prince.

Jehanghir

Indeed, he is so noble, generous, and kind;  
 To Hawkins and Roe he proved a princely mind.

Nur Jehan

But Shuridar most of all upholds our pride;  
 In him let all our hopes and trusts abide.  
 Though young, his promise fits with our desires;  
 For he was born a master of empires.  
 Let all our love for him anew now spring  
 That he respect our memories when king.

Jehanghir

Ay, ay, fair Nur Jehan! So be it still.  
 I rule the Empire; rule you the Emperor's will.  
 Is aught to do? Ah!

Nur Jehan

Yes, we must indite  
 Mohabet's instant recall from the fight.  
*(Nur Jehan writes and places document before Jehanghir)*

Jehanghir

Charge you with treason! Insult you when you come!  
 What tributes to worthiness returned home!  
 My dearest friend! My pity weeps.

Nur Jehan

Be strong.

When Right requires, royal hands erase the wrong.

Jehanghir

Ay, ay, my Queen, your wisdom is mine own :  
So fall all traitors; flourish so our throne.

*(Signs Mohabet's warrant)*

Ah, I am scarce too strong to last a time,  
In days of treason, rebellion and crime.  
Ay, ay, fair Nur Jehan, to Cashmere straight!

Nur Jehan

Prepare to leave with every pomp and state! (*Exeunt*).

SCENE 2—BUBHANPORE.

Prince Shah Jehan's camp outside the city.

*Enter Shah Jehan*

Shah Jehan

Here do we pause in our travels of distress :  
Mohabet gone, the enemy no more press.  
This from that hero ere he left the field :—  
"Amend your mutiny and in duty yield !  
"Copy this pattern of a subject," he says ;  
"Mohabet, recalled 'mid victories obeys " ;  
And ends with "Ever your friend." Generous man !  
His nature hath no equal in Hindustan.  
Yet cannot I rest : these crosses fire my blood,  
And proudest passions pour in my heart like a flood.  
When we assailed Akbarabad, our arms  
Asaf repulsed ; and Jehanghir 'mid alarms  
Prepared to march against us. Then it was  
We argued our rebellion, proved its cause,  
But failed in his conviction. An action arose :  
We were defeated. Purvez followed close,  
Engaged us by the Nerbudda and,—oh,  
How devils dogged us to repeated woe !—  
Again we lost ; to the Mewat mountains fled ;  
Whence we returned, recrossed the river bed,  
And on that bank threw up redoubts. Then, then,  
With empty purse and heart, our dastard men  
Deserted us, distressed ! Again those heights,  
And down again to muster warring wights ;

Which done, Guzerat, Bengal, Bihar were ours.  
 Purvez once more confronts, once more o'erpowers;  
 But Dacca falls to us with treasure and store,  
 And conquered zemindars proud presents pour;  
 Rhotak's Governor resigns his keys,  
 Vows fealty and invokes felicities.  
 Now led we forty thousand horse, when, lo!  
 Mohabet appeared in arms, and at a blow  
 He beggared us. Could I forgive or yield?  
 I'd rather bled! Mine tore me from the field.  
 We wandered to the Deccan. He pursued.  
 We lost the little left, yet never sued.  
 Amber, out with the king, allied us here:  
 Burhanpore was reduced. Mohabet near,  
 Arrived and raised the seige. We'll not yet yield!  
 Ho! Ho! there are some cowards left! (*Enter a General*).  
 To field!

General

Great strength's in the battlements of Burhanpore.

Shah Jehan

No matter! To battle! I'd end this war (*Exit General*)  
 Thus was it ever with the lives of kings,  
 A plague unto themselves and to all things!  
 And soul, as you foretold, alas it is:  
 The Queen gives Shuriar what's nor hers, nor his,  
 The throne! Ah, can such insult be brooked by me  
 That is such injury to my progeny?  
 Never! Bear up, my heart, this dire distress;  
 Or blood still flows, or all my right confess!  
 Shuriar, king! As well might an ass reign,  
 If asses e'er a government could feign!  
 Shuriar, king! Let mortal tongue but frame  
 That slander to mine ear; and in Heaven's name,  
 Look, here I vow, that tongue my sword shall rend  
 In twain! Shuriar! Shuriar! God forfend!

*Enter a noble, paying obeisance.*

What will this hireling? Man, who is your king?

Noble

The Emperor, royal highness, is my king.  
(*Enter other nobles, etc.; re-enter general.*)

Shah Jehan

Fool, who then is that king, your emperor?  
Speak the honest truth, sirrah; speak from your core:  
Breathe but that thought that instinct lent your soul;  
Or, by my blade, you'll reach your hellward goal!  
Speak! Is't my father, is't Shuriar, or I?  
For, as I live, that moment you lie, you die!

2nd Noble

Hail, gracious King! Hail Emperor Shah Jehan!

All

Hail, gracious King! Hail Emperor Shah Jehan!

Shah Jehan

To business, myrmidons!

"Hail King", forsooth!

Your tongues were taught by flattery, not truth.

Why idle here? Your place is at the fray.

You dally to lisp your lies to me? Away!

*Shah Jehan dons the imperial purple: exeunt nobles and  
generals, &c., sullenly: enter a messenger and re-  
enter first noble.*

Messenger

Royal highness!

Shah Jehan

Slave! (*Strikes at him*).

1st Noble

Say "Majesty,"

Messenger

Your majesty!

Shah Jehan

You've escaped eternity!

Messenger

Benign majesty! Great news I have to give,

Shah Jehan

If it be good news, reptile, you may live.

Messenger

Proud majesty! By Allah's choicest grace,  
Mohabet Khan hath fallen out of place.

Shah Jehan

'Tis neither good nor bad: you rob this blade.

Messenger

Your father's air to him is cold, 'tis said.

Shah Jehan

My father's means, my mother's. Ha, is't so?  
Lost favour? On what cause? Hence, fellow, go!  
Command our spies fetch further news of this.  
Worm all the Queen's intents. Go! (*Exit messenger*)  
(*Aside*)—

Ha, so it is!

Mohabet fallen—he who served his king!  
Mohabet down, my valiant foe! Strange thing!—  
Are all our soldiers ready?

1st Noble

They are so

Shah Jehan

The hour hath struck for Hindustan to know  
Who is her lord, and the cannon of this war  
Shall sound the name of her true Emperor!  
Ho, Rustam Khan! Ho, Khanni Khana! Ho!

*Enter Generals.*

1st General

Your Majesty, they're with your father.

Shah Jehan

So?

Since when deserted?

2nd General

Since last Burhanpore,  
Shah Jehan

Here doubted they my fortunes! Avenging war,  
Storm this accursed place! Roar! Shake the sky  
With earthly thunder! Lighten, that cowards may die!  
What news from Bhim Singh, from Allahabad?

3rd General

The city's most like hourly to be had,

Shah Jehan.

Bengal, Bihar, Guzerat and Rajmahal  
Are no more ours?

1st Noble.

No more.

Shah Jehan

Again they'll fall;

And so a'll else, beneath our crushing powers.

Hence! With battering rams burst Burhanpore's towers—

And speed to Amber—say I come: begone!

Order my horse! Quick march the soldiers on!

*(Exit Shah Jehan: noble and generals following: guns).*

*Re-enter Shah Jehan.*

Shah Jehan

Such stubborn opposition! Are they sprites

That so resist our blood-hounds and our rights!

Their very gates I stormed with deadly hail,

And yet they fight as if with tooth and nail. *(Guns).*

*Enter a second messenger*

Whence come your tidings?

2nd Messenger

Hail your majesty!

From Delhi, where strange whispers travesty

The fortunes of your father.

Shah Jehan

What is said?

2nd Messenger

With rarest gossip, the mob have lost their head,

Of woe unto your father. Him they think

In straits so sudden that he needs must sink;

If not himself engulfed, his great prestige.

*Enter Noble*

1st Noble

Hail, the tide's against!

Shah Jehan

No matter; keep up the seige.

*(Exit 1st Noble).*

Shah Jehan

What's this calamity?

2nd Messenger

'Tis a rumour vague.

Some ill's imagined to befall, some plague  
To the sinews of your father's life and reign;  
To the empire some great indefinite bane. (*Guns*).

Shah Jehan

Hence! Rock this baby incoherence to sleep.  
Wake manly truth; glean all of this; drink deep:  
Then hither turn with news fair-bodied. Go!

(*Exit Messenger*).

Till he return, peace, inquisitors of woe!

*Re-enter 1st General.*

1st General

Hail! Many a noble hath deserted!

Shah Jehan

Curse,

On the cowards!

1st General

More generals and men.

Shah Jehan

Then curse,

Hell's curse on me! Ten thousand curses! Go!

Get you with them, and lead the rest!

1st General

Nay—

Shah Jehan

Go! (*Exit General*).

There is some Demon 'neath me steals my ground.

My heart bows low. Misfortunes surge around.

The folly of trust in men! Disease, my guilt,

Losses—all oppress! Flash out my sword! Here, hilt,

Be firm in fearless hands! Point, seek my heart,

And slay these sorrows raiding every part!

(*Bends on his sword*).

All man mine enemy: I, theirs! O thought!

(*The sword drops*).

How, falchion! Treason? False to me! Yet! What!

Thou cannibal be still : hold, tiger-thought !  
Thy carnage shall not crown my cursed lot.  
Destructive Death, prerogative of God,  
Approves no human hand for human blood.  
The mood hath passed. I stoop to pardon thee, blade.  
Amend thee in thy scabbard. Was I made  
Myself a coward ? Blush, passion, with the rose.  
To brook no consequence but fix my foes—  
To mount on a murderous mission of rapine ?  
The gammon sickness me. I fall to pine....  
What may this mean ? My father steeped in woe ?  
Then rack, my heart, or poison still they flow.  
No danger to the kingdom breeds my fears :  
Who dares this arm, or dies, or lives in tears !  
But this—this woe— my father's woe ! Ah me !  
My father's ! Fates, what may this mishap be ?  
So chances it with passions as with wars.  
We glow, we fury, we tire, we coldly pause.  
And now 'tis 'gainst my father that I strike ;  
The son against him whom he is most like ;  
The flesh against that of whose blood it is ;  
A man against himself. What strife is this ?  
Ah, human heart, what mockeries you hide !  
Beneath my father's roof I did abide ;  
He gave me life and wealth and power and rank,  
And of those gifts forged I weapons. So men thank !  
Repent, my heart ! Restore thy blindness, eyes !  
To honour himself, man honours Nature's ties.  
Perchance 'twill cheer him in his grief to find  
His rebel son disclaim his rebel mind.  
Perchance he will relent, perchance forbear,  
If with repentance hostages I bear.

*Writes :—*I cease to be a rebel. My crushing crimes  
have caused my miseries. My father, look now to find  
in me only a dutiful and loving son, in proof whereof I  
offer you in all humility and sacrifice my sons as host-  
ages. So prays for your forgiveness, likewise for the  
destruction of your enemies, and the end of all your  
sorrows—Shah Jehan.



Sirrah, come hither ! Ho, anyone without ?

*Enter an attendant*

Attendant

Here, please your majesty.

Shah Jehan

(*Aside*).—

But as I thought.

Thus robs he, too, my father of this right :

Such is the influence of ill-used might.

Well, Majesty ! 'Tis but a breath, a show.—

Bear this, straight to my father.

Attendant

Your Maj—

Shah Jehan

Go !

(*Exit a tendant*).

Thus eased, my soul, of guilt's most sore impress,

The sceptre of the land I may, perhaps, yet possess.

Man often dreams to win by deeds unjust

What haply be by honest means needs must.

*Enter Malik Amber.*

Ah, ancient foe, our present friend in need !

Good tidings sit on smiles.

Malik Amber

Your fortunes God-speed !

Great news runs on the heels of foregoing news.

Shah Jehan

And Amber's drunk with all the joy it brews.

Malik Amber

To pledge your opportunity, Prince Shah Jehan.

Returning from your last pursuit, Mohabet Khan,

Expecting honours from royal gratitude

Flies home, but finds the Emperor in feud.

The same he saved and guarded from your heats,

Mocks with his ice-cold courtesy all his feats ;

Resenting which the hero to Rintimpour

Withdraws his troops, his castle proud of yore,

When, why, and where subject and king turn foes,

Thrice vainly bid return, fourth time he goes,

Mid brave five thousand Rajputs to Lahore.

Distrust was well conceived : the Emperor  
Forthwith demands his revenues and plunder  
To which adds this outrageous, ill-thought blunder,  
Strips, bastinadoes the warrior's son-in-law,  
Mounts him, upon a tatoo lean and raw,  
Reversed and ragged-robed, so to depart;  
Jeered by the rabble through the public mart !  
Indignant, parched for revenge, Mohabet, lo !  
As the royal army where the Jhelum doth flow  
Bethought to cross it, their manœuvres marred;  
Straight seized the bridge ; then with his eager guard,  
Five hundred strong, among his courtiers  
Sought out the Emperor now all lost in fears.  
"Your sceptre were mine," he said, "were I a thief."  
And India's Emperor trembled like a leaf !  
"I'll serve my sovereign with life's dearest breath  
"Against his foes, but ne'er covet my death  
"To feed the malice of his faithless friends—  
"Here must I now receive and make amends"—  
Then laid no hand on him but held him free,  
Making his terms peace and indemnity :  
And the Queen, who fierce battled Mohabet Khan,  
Yet battled in vain, fled—fled brave Nur Jehan !  
Then being recalled, from Cabul she returned ;  
But in her soul revenge at white heat burned ;  
Mohabet dreading her required her death,  
And won the imperial warrant for her breath.  
Yet she more powerful with her woman wits  
Comes to Jehanghir's presence, where the conqueror sits,  
Proffers her hand, clasps his, and heaving with love  
Gives each her snowy bosom for a glove.  
There standing in silent sorrow her beauty shines.  
Jehanghir weeps : his prayer with grief combines.  
Mohabet yields her life. But, ah to think  
How low may nature in our malice sink !  
Death to Mohabet, the saviour of her life,  
Who freed his captive king in blameless strife,  
And—with your—leave ruled their rebellious son ;  
Death, death, she vows and leaves no ill undone

Nor spares a scruple for a great man's fate,  
 But to his power and puissance puts a date !  
 Mohabet flies his castle, his goods, his all,  
 Declared a rebel.

Shah Jehan

Oh inglorious fall !

Malik Amber

Stripped of his fame, a price upon his head ;  
 Sought through the kingdom, living or dead.

Shah Jehan

Faith, there's no cause in all this woe to smile !

Malik Amber

Not for Mohabet, prince, but that the while  
 The land lies open north, south, east and west :  
 Your throne is in the north—that way were best.  
 We've raised the seige. Leave this, and go that way.

Shah Jehan

There's reason that to this we answer 'nay'.  
 Nay, Amber, e'en the strong to Nature yield.  
 We long for pleasure, tiring of the field,  
 Say "faugh" to war, "welcome" to rest and peace.

Malik Amber

Hast sued for peace ?

Shah Jehan

Ay, so we have.

Malik Amber

Then cease.

Shah Jehan

So, Malik Amber, we part upon this ground.  
 Go, prosper ! Where you rule, there joys abound !  
 For all your pains our thanks; our heart is yours :  
 Bear you your state in feodalty to ours.

Malik Amber

Adieu, my lord ! My service e'er for you !  
 Allah bless Shah Jehan !

Shah Jehan

And Amber !

Malik Amber

Adieu ! (*Exit*).

Shah Jehan

He wishes well, but it is wise in me  
To ease contrition; pack peace with policy.  
Ho ! Ho ! Is anyone there ?

*Enter 1st General*

Still linger you ?

1st General

Myself and some few others.

Shah Jehan

How many "few" ?

1st General

One thousand horse, by present muster.

Shah Jehan

Well,

Time's but a jester at man's court. Truth to tell,  
We do not need so many ! Pay the half :  
The other part remains our personal staff.  
Thank all for their allegiance. As for you,  
I shall remember your adherence. Adieu (*Exit General*).  
So, all but free at last ! Now breathe, breathe, Shah Jehan !  
My sons may go—and while there's Nur Jehan,  
I and five hundred horse shall watch the times,  
Travel for pleasure and adjure these crimes !  
(*Casts off the purple robe—and exit*).

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SCENE 3.—AGRA.

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The Prime Minister's chamber in the Fort.

*Enter Asaf Khan and attendants.*

Asaf Khan

Look out for news. Retire. (*Exeunt attendants*).

How strange these times !

Histories enwrapped in hours, like pantomimes;  
All pomp and power revolving with the days,  
And kingdom's fluctuating as in plays.  
The King indeed absolves Mohabet, true:  
But not the Queen, in whom deep mischiefs brew.

Her proud resentment claims the hero's head;  
 We countercheck her, but her thoughts are red  
 With bloodiness: her schemes reek so of spite.  
 Mohabet was the victor; his the right  
 To rule the ruler's empery erst-while;  
 Nature's proud pattern of man; no ill, no guile;  
 Firm friend and trusty servant of Jehanghir;  
 In valour and in loyalty sans a peer.  
 The marble pillar of this kingdom's throne,  
 Proclaimed a traitor, and robbed of all renown!  
 Victory on victory his strong arm scored,  
 With Shah Jehan's rebellion when he warred.  
 If thus are prized man's valour and man's worth,  
 The good and great must curse their hour of birth!  
 What fruit should come of this—father and son,  
 Subject and emperor blade to blade, and none  
 Content in all the land? If thus it goes,  
 What peace can follow then where there be foes.  
 I see the wreckage of this empire sealed;  
 I hear its doom in the guns that late have pealed.  
 Yet may it glow, and when it most doth shine,  
 The eve approaches with its swift decline;  
 The clouds foregather, bearing it away  
 To the sad setting of a glorious day!

*Enter attendant.*

Attendant

My lord, a man without seeks audience.

Asaf Khan

What kind of man?

Attendant

With veiled countenance.

Mean dressed, no tongue at all, in short a stranger.

Asaf Khan

Demand his business. (*Exit attendant*).

This may be some danger.

Treason on all sides stirs rebellious arms.

Purvez being ill, Shuridar mid great alarms,

Trembles unprepared, while spies are everywhere.

'Twere well in such confusion to have a care.

*Enter Mohabet Khan disguised, and guards.*

Asaf Khan

*(With hand at the hilt of his sword).*

Transcribe your wish, dumb stranger—first your name.

And yet—O wonder! 'Tis indeed the same!

Go, sirrahs! *(Exit guards).*

Mohabet Khan

Not a word too soon!

Asaf Khan

Friend! *(Falls on his neck and weeps).*

Mohabet Khan

Friend!

In privacy my mission hath its end.

Asaf Khan

Mohabet this is sudden. What's your will,

That thus in a visit fraught with peril,

You come to name it? What theme so paramount

Bend you, contemning life here to recount?

Mohabet Khan

My will's to know and bow to yours; my theme—

The Emperor!

Asaf Khan

He treats you ill 'twould seem;

Is full of changes, like the air and sky;

No judgment but the Queen's to govern by;

The ruler of the land himself o'er ruled.

Were kings by women e'er so fondly schooled!

Such is that emperor. Now, what of him?

Mohabet Khan

The Emperor's my theme, not Jehanghir's whim.

The throne being vacant, who'll be Emperor?

That is my question. Cost it graves in war,

The kingdom's sceptre only he must sway

Whose strong and politic hand can hold it—nay,

Who ruling wisely may yet save the state,

That crumbles in these days of common hate!

This is my answer. Asaf, name me yours.

Asaf Khan

You diagnose but minister no cures.

Hath Shuriar no claim to royalty?

Mohabet Khan

The Empire's doomed if ruled by such as he.  
Shuriar is a vain stripling. Asaf, I own  
He is your ward, the Queen's too-favoured son:  
But let not love your higher trusts belie—  
This highest trust, an empire's destiny.

Asaf Khan

'Tis just, Mohabet: your verdict issues true;  
But is the crown a gift from me or you?  
Since by bequest the realm to Shuriar's given,  
Not you, nor I, nor other constitution  
May say, "Shuriar is not our emperor,"  
Nor another reign without the cost of war.  
Whom would you crown, Mohabet, against such odds?

Mohabet Khan

Him, Asaf, whom the living God of gods  
Hath pre-ordained in heaven our sovereign;  
Him first by right, though not respect of kin.  
Let Shah Jehan be Emperor.

Asaf Khan

Shah Jehan!

Mohabet Khan

Than him, Asaf, there breathes no worthier man.

Asaf Khan

Him would Mohabet serve as Emperor?  
O noble, great, Mohabet!

Mohabet Khan

From my core,  
I would none other. Beshrew the bitter past.  
What if I battled him, his powers did blast,  
Till all his army fled before my sword?  
Did I not make my subject his father, my lord?  
Let calumny cavil, have I sought the crown?  
I loved my duty, ne'er e'en prized renown?

Asaf Khan

You dress your arguments as they deserve,

Up to their rank. Khurrim's interests we'll serve.  
 Since both ways we may fear our heads to lose,  
 Our best device were strategy and ruse.

*Enter attendant.*

Mohabet Khan

E'en so.

Attendant

*(Aside).*—O miracle, the dumb to speak !  
 Why, this should still my speech for many a week !—  
 Sire, news ! *(Exit attendant).*

*Enter messenger : the multitudes mourn outside.*

Mohabet Khan

What means this hum ?

Messenger

'Tis a mournful day !

Our gracious emperor —

Asaf Khan

Is dying ?

Messenger

Nay,

The Emperor is dead.

Mohahet Khan

Too soon and sad.

Asaf Khan

O, woe ! The empire's case is truly bad.

Messenger

While journeying from Kashmere to Lahore,  
 Passed from its clay the soul of the Emperor.

Mohabet Khan

The greatness of the Empire hath expired !

Asaf Khan

Deluging dole ! God's help is now required.

Mohabet Khan

Where's Purvez ?

Messenger

Sire, he breathes no more !

Mohabet Khan

O Star,

That slays the empire so !



Messenger

And Shuridar

Is ill.

Mohabet Khan

How strange!

Asaf Khan

And yet, in the noon of night,

Life waxes like the moon, serenely bright,

Then wanes, and reeling westward disappears.

So life bears all our joys, hopes, hates and fears.

*(Exit messenger).*

Mohabet Khan

Now mark me, Asaf—mark me, ere I go,

There are three suitors to one, fair, widowed crown.

All princes royal.

Asaf Khan

Shuridar is one,

And Shah Jehan.

Mohabet Khan

The third is Dawir Buksh,

The heir of Kushru.

Asaf Khan

What he? Dawir Buksh?

Mohabet Khan

Ay, he. Since India's pledged to Shah Jehan,

Humour the others.

Asaf Khan

'Twere no easy plan.

Mohabet Khan

Nothing so easy. Send Shuridar to war

Towards Shah Jehan; crown Dawir emperor;

Leave the rest to my contrivance.

Asaf Khan

How?

Mohabet Khan

But thus.

Shah with the Deccan in arms approaches us:

Take Shuridar, uncrown Dawir—

Asaf Khan

'Tis said

Tco well: then Emperor and Empire wed !

Mohabet Khan

If acted well, this consequence must ensue.

Asaf Khan

Heaven's help! What's best that must we always do.

Mohabet Khan

How sudden are these mishaps great with good !

'Tis now our care to safe deliver their brood.

I'll straight in person unto Shah Jehan :

Do you observe these two and Nur Jehan.

There may be impediments to good, indeed ;

But in the justice of our cause we must succeed. (*Exit*).

*Enter Prince Shuriar*

Shuriar

In this our heart's most painful season, sir,

Receive the sympathy my thoughts aver.

Asaf Khan

Thanks.

Shuriar

Uncle, see. I wander here in dread—

Heart cold, head hot, both aching heart and head—

Escaping from the prison of my couch

To give you notice of this Deed's avouch.

(*Hand: Jehanghir's will*).

Asaf Khan

Dear nephew, thanks. This parchment wills the throne.

To you and your successors : yet I own

Since we have news your brother ventures war,

To slay your title, himself to be emperor,

This is no fit occasion to be crowned.

Forthwith array your troops on battle-ground,

O'erthrow your enemy, and then return.

To an all-pompous coronation.

Shuriar

I burn;

My tendons fail me: how may I

Then, wield a blade or dog an enemy?

Asaf Khan

Your generals will force the foe to yield.  
The royal elephant must to the field;  
Else follows fixed disaster.

Shuriar

Well, then, so  
Fortune be kind. To war a wreck I go! (*Exit*).

Asaf Khan

Poor lad! What destiny is doom'd to you  
By heaven and our own duty, oh, if I knew.  
I might rebel against them both. But so!t!

*Enter Prince Dawir Buksh.*

Welcome, young Prince!

Dawir Buksh

I hope for welcome! What oft  
My dreams prefigured, this day hath made good.  
I've seen my father's spectre ro'éd in blood:  
I've heard his spirit cry:—"Be Emperor!"  
The night is past; day dawns for vengeance and war—  
Vengeance for Shah Jehan, for Shuriar war.  
My father, they die! I shall be emperor.  
Answer, wise Asaf—is the only son  
Of his murdered eldest son to mount the throne,  
Or Jehanghir's youngest son? What is the law?

Asaf Khan

Restrain your temper, prince. There is no flaw  
In your jurisprudence; nor is there need  
To add a bloodier to a bloody deed,  
Or launch in wanton war. Let them to field.  
If both survive, still one or other must yield;  
And while they battle, here the throne is free:  
Mount you and master all its majesty.  
Once crowned, man all the battlements around.  
Thus victor and vanquished both you shall confound.

Dawir Buksh

This is your honest counsel?

Asaf Khan

So I own.

Dawir Buksh

Then lend a hand, to help me ride my throne.

Asaf Khan

First to the chamber of the royal dead,  
And then to business. (*Exit*)

Dawir Buksh

Or death if falsely said ! (*Exit*),

*Re-enter Shuriar and attendant.*

Shuriar

This is my crown and sceptre. Till I return  
Keep guard o'er them.

Attendant

I will, my lord.

Shuriar

And earn

A lawful emperor's thanks.

Attendant

I will, my lord (*Exit Shuriar*).

*Re-enter Dawir Buksh*

Ha ! Thanks. Begone.

Attendant

I guard.

Dawir Buksh

Nay, I'm on guard.

*Re-enter Asaf Khan*

Asaf Khan

Go, man. All's well. (*Exit attendant*). Receive your  
sceptre and crown,

King Dawir Buksh; and so, go mount thy throne.

I will attend your imperial majesty.

Dawir Buksh

Thanks (*Exit Asaf*). 'Tis a curious coronation ! Why,  
I'll rule at once ! (*Exit Dawir Buksh*.)

*Re-enter attendant.*

Attendant

What, juggling with the crown

And sceptre ! Sure there's trouble with the throne !

'Tis just as well I'm freed from my great charge ;

For now I'll bet there's an emperor at large.

By all the great Moghuls, lo, here he comes !  
 A full blown king without his serfs and drums ! (*Exit*).  
*Re-enter Dawir Buksh, 'crowned and sceptred'.*

Dawir Buksh

Demons of witchcraft, hooded in night's cloak,  
 You and your legions I, King Dawir, invoke !  
 By my crown command, my sceptre conjure you,  
 If you've eyes and ears, as you have wits for wee,  
 To loose this horrid spell ! They s off, the fiends !  
 And with malignant hissing puff the winds !  
 Spirits hellish, hear me ! Hear me, and reply !  
 Tempest, be still ; obey my majesty !  
 They scorn me. Devils ! No soul within these walls,  
 From arc to arc no sound, in yon hollow halls,  
 Save the deep resonance of my footfall.  
 The courts, palaces, streets, deserted all,  
 And I meandering like the soul of ungraved man,  
 I, I, the living Emperor of Hindustan !  
 Devils, unhand me, unseal my charmed sight !  
 Why, the fort is filled ; they crowd to left and right,  
 My courtiers, councillors, all, my subject hordes.  
 Here's Asaf, there bowing nobles, kneeling lords.  
 Com — nay, that's nothing ! I see, yet am I blind ;  
 Reason hath not bereft me, yet mad's my mind !  
 I see, am blind ; I'm sane, unsound, My tone  
 I hear ; the air imbibe ; feel the touch of this crown.  
 May't be a dream ? Hark ! 'Tis my sceptr 's sound.  
 And ey these battlements—all is bare around !  
 Alone I paced the palace, through each vaulted hall  
 Throwing up echoes wildly from wall to wall ;  
 The fort's untenanted. My people gone !  
 I besat my throne as a spectre, all alone,  
 In a den of earth or stenching tomb enthroned,  
 To rule in silent anguish, sceptred, crowned !  
 Less lunacy than a curse ! More fate then sorcery !  
 What avails me now my mocking majesty ?  
 Why am I Agra's King, Ind's Emper r,  
 If the world is dead and joyous rule no more ?  
 No train of pomp, no drums, none to homage me,

Nor bows, nor knees, nor tongues of flattery.  
 Demons or fates, which'er you be, desist!  
 But hark! I rule? My starveling e re, list, list!

Enter budmashes

What! Ruffians to the presence of royalty!  
 Hence, uncouth v llains. Nay, but stay. Tell me,  
 Where : re the serfs of my crowned majesty?

1st budmash

The only loyal left, my lord, are we;  
 The rest are at war.

Dawir Buksh

What only rogues to rule!

War, and their king defenceless! Come then, fool,  
 And be my minister. Come fools, you, and you,  
 Lords of a realmless emperor.

2nd budmash

Testy, but true!—

(*Aside*).—

My lord, I'll hold your sceptre.

Dawir Buksh

Ay, omrah, there!

3rd budmash

And I, your crown.

Dawir Buksh

That too? Well, noble, there!

1st budmash

And now, my lord, unlace your purple robes.

Dawir Buksh

Nay, that I must deny: kings keep their robes.

1st budmash

Kings do.

2nd budmash

We keep these for the king.

(*2nd and 3rd budmashes bear crown and sceptre aside*).

Dawir Buksh

Ha! What!

Undone by rogues already! Keep them?

2nd budmash

Ay.

Dawir Buksh

What!

Whoever that trusted knaves escaped a snare?

Away!

2nd & 3rd budmashes

Ho! Ho!

Dawir Buksh

My crown and sceptre there!

1st budmash

This is the king's, my lord.

Dawir Buksh

Ay, 'tis the king's.

2nd Budmash

And this, my lord.

Dawir Buksh

And that. They are the king's:

Then, villains, give them to the king.

3rd budmash

Ay, ay.

We'll presently attend the king.

Dawir Buksh

Nay, nay,

You do attend.

1st budmash

Titles are often lent.

Here is the warrant of our argument.

Dawir Buksh

(Reads). "Conduct Prince Dawir Buksh to prison.

Asaf Khan,

Prime Minister to the Emperor."

Prince Dawir Buksh! Who may that personage be?

To prison! Ha! The Emperor! I am he!

Throned, crowned, and sceptred king of Hindustan.

Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! A happy hoax, my man!

"Merry comedians, for our royal sport,

We'll have you and your troupe play at our court."

1st budmash

We are no players, nor is this comedy :  
Yet are we here to act. (*produces chains*).

Dawir Buksh

Hold, villainy!

Beware! Nay, stand aside! I say, beware!

2nd budmash

That matters not, my lord.

Dawir Buksh

Robbers, you dare!

3rd budmash

We do.

Dawir Buksh

Hold!

1st budmash

Help!

2nd budmash

Nay, hold him fast.

Dawir Buksh

Leave me!

3rd budmash

First wear this guerdon.

Dawir Buksh

Insult to royalty!

1st budmash

Now lead him.

2nd budmash

Ay.

3rd budmash

Come.

Dawir Buksh

Have I ears and eyes?

Am I awake?

1st budmash

We are.

Dawir Buksh

Villains tell lies.



1st budmash  
To tell the truth, you'll fast in jail.

Dawir Buksh

Jail! I'

2nd budmash  
And, may be, soon you'll breakfast in the sky.

Dawir Buksh

Then this for freedom! (*Struggles*).

1st, 2nd, 3rd budmashes

Keep the prisoner down!

Dawir Buksh

Be plain.

Whose prisoner?

1st budmash

The Emperor Shah Jehan's.

Dawir Buksh

O bane!

A murderer's! Then hurl me to my doom!

The spell's revoked! Chained like a cur, and by whom?

The man who slew my father, a fratricide!

2nd budmash

We must not hear our Emperor calumniated.

1st budmash

On, lads. The play is over. I'll carry these.

(*Takes up crown and sceptre*)

Dawir Buksh

Hell's gift to the imposter for his villainies!

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#### SCENE 4—AGRA.

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A battle-field near Agra. Prince Shah Jehan's camp.

*Enter Shah Jehan, Mohabet Khan, generals, &c.*

Mohabet Khan

Here at your feet, great king, I beg your grace.

Shah Jehan

Arise, and read your pardon in our face.

We had your letter; you have our trust in all.

We approve your plans to compass Shuriar's fall.

Our fortunes are affirmed upon the field;  
 Even Mohabet's valour could not make us yield!  
 And now, my father entomb'd, Purvez too dead;  
 'The crown ordained to cap Shuriar's frail head—  
 Now shall I strike as no man ever—now  
 Stake body and soul to lay my brother low!  
 What strength is in his opposition?

Mohabet Khan

None.

The Prince's hopes must needs be all undone.  
 His troops are faint for courage, few fit to fight;  
 Himself holds them but feebly to his right.  
 Lodi alone, with all his Deccan command,  
 In Shuriar's favour doth madly make a stand.

Shah Jehan

Back hence, Mohabet: swift to Asaf fly.  
 Stay! Are our forces moved where Shuriar's lie?

Mohabet Khan

They are, my liege, and some success have met.  
 Meantime for him we have cast out a net.

Shah Jehan (To Mohabet).

Defeated and taken, his person close immure;  
 And that from rivals we may feel secure,  
 Pluck out his eyes—but not too cruelly.  
 Blinded he cannot hope for majesty!  
 (To Generals) March on against Lodi 'mid drums and  
 alarms.

Victory shall rest upon our royal arms (*Exeunt generals*).  
 How fares the Emperor in prison, sad?  
 I'd forfeit ten bright spheres, if I but had,  
 To have eye-witnessed his abdication! See (*Guns*).  
 The foe! Let's part.

Mohabet Khan

Adieu, your majesty! (*Exit*).

Shah Jehan

Poor Dawir Buksh! Ind's Emperor one day;  
 The next, my prisoner! Ah, well you may,  
 Proud son of Kushru, taste a monarch's joy,  
 Denied your father! Puppet, mountebank, toy,

You ruled to trample Shuriar's majesty :  
And he, he too is bound. Both you shall die! (*Exit;*  
*drums ; guns, etc.*)

Prince Shuriar's Camp. Enter Shuriar, generals, etc.  
Shuriar

I am too ill to rouse my heart to fight.  
Go generals, stir your men to hold my right. (*Exeunt*  
*generals, etc.*)

Close weary eyes, and ease my woes in sleep.  
Enter spies

1st spy  
We are in fortune's way : he slumbers deep.  
Go, guard the tent ; our purposes may leak. (*Exit*  
*2nd spy*).

I'll stop his mouth : that way no news may squeak.

3rd spy  
Meantime I'll bind him. (*To cord, that snaps*). Double  
then: now break! (*Shuriar is gagged and bound*).

1st spy  
Hush, softly! Quick! Be quick!

3rd spy  
Ho, prince, awake?

1st spy  
Now all is done, we'll bear him hence away.

3rd spy  
Our horses stay.

2nd spy  
Haste! Haste! They come this way! (*Exeunt with Shuriar*)  
*Re-enter generals, &c.*

1st General  
Your royal highness' men will not to the fray—  
How now ! The prince hath gone !

2nd General  
'Twas here he lay.

A rope !

1st General  
, This is the witness of his fate.  
The Prince is wrested to a captive state.

Come comrades, crushed is all our might :  
Our coward troops have now no cause to fight. (*Guns :  
exeunt*).

Lodi's camp.

*Enter Lodi, generals, &c.*

Lodi

Soldiers, be true to your stout and warlike hearts !  
Justice hopes in our prestige and our parts !

*Enter an Officer from Shah Jehan.*

What have you from your master ?

Officer

My lord, this much (*Guns*).  
Shah Jehan's powers, e'en now in sight, are such  
In prowess and in muster, that in all  
They'll bide no parley but straight seal your fall.

Lodi

An Afghan ne'er yet feared the bravest brave,  
Nor crouched before numbers till hushed in a grave !  
We care not for the Prince's vaunting. Go ! (*Guns*).

Officer

My lord, the king will brook no insults so.  
He tires of your obstruction and your taunts ;  
And once provoked there's nothing him that daunts.  
Prince Shuriar's at home fast bound in chains :  
There stays no further cause for war's great pains.  
The king seeks your submission and offers you  
The Government of Malwa.

General

(*Aside to Lodi*)—

Thus they sue.

Lodi

(*Aside to General*)—Is Shuriar prisoner, know you.

General

(*Aside to Lodi*)—

He is.

Lodi

The king, you say? Then bear for answer this.  
If Shah Jehan be India's King, Lodi  
Now owes allegiance to him. So I  
Here, then, lay down mine arms : so you depart  
And tell the king he now commands my heart.

In honour that was his foe is now his friend :  
 So may my loyalty and his love ne'er end.

Officer

I shall proclaim this noble mind in you.  
 My lord, my duty and farewell ! (*Exit*).

Lodi

Adieu !

(*Guns ; noise ; trample of horses*)

Prepare for our surrender. Honour lies  
 In stamping our duty in our destinies.

*Enter a General with escort.*

General

Lodi surrenders to the Emperor Shah Jehan ?

Lodi

He hath in honour already, valiant man !  
 (*General signals to march. Exeunt*).

Shah Jehan's camp

*Enter Shah Jehan, generals, &c.*

Shah Jehan

What news ?

1st General

The guard returns. Expect him now.

2nd General

E'en here he comes !

*Enter Lodi with General and escort.*

Shah Jehan

(*Aside*)—

Such valour on that brow !

Lodi

All hail, your majesty. Low, at your feet (*Kneels*).  
 I pledge my true allegiance.

Shah Jehan

All greet ! (*General salute*).

We know to value worth and bravery.

Lodi

Praise which if ours, is yours too, equally.

Shah Jehan

*Aside*—Ha ! Equally !—Assume your office here,  
 Ruler of Malwa.

Lodi

Lord, my thanks are dear.

Shah Jehan

We march to Agra forthwith to be crowned,  
And make this famous realm yet more renowned.

Lodi

'Twould give me joy your witness there to be.

Shah Jehan

Nay, nay, Lodi!

Lodi

As pleases your Majesty.

Shah Jehan

We love obedience. Your province is in need  
Of you. There, go.

Lodi

*(Aside)* His words are stings!—I will, indeed.

Shah Jehan

*(To Generals)*—

So warriors, all is o'er.

March, Lodi, to Malwa: I, to be Emperor!

*(Exeunt all but Lodi).*

Lodi

Methinks he mocks me—me, royal of blood.  
He does not bear me any honest good.  
I'll nurse this slight, this peremptory command  
That bars me from his coronation at hand.  
Yea, time will prove me true, if the time's not sore.  
So long my heart be loyal—but never more! *(Exit).*

\* \* \* \* \*

*The road to Agra (the Fort in view).*

Shah Jehan's triumphal entry, soldiers marching, cavalcade, multitudes thronging and cheering on all sides in a long procession, captive trains and trophies following. Music, drums, &c. Shah Jehan (decked in all pomp with garlands and jewels) on an elephant, with the royal body-guard. Asaf Khan, Mohabet Khan, Lords, etc., mounted. The procession halts; thronging on both sides.

*Enter Shah Jehan (with guards)—A.  
Enter Asaf Khan, Mohabet Khan, Lords, etc.—B.  
(the royal standard waving)*

Asaf and Mohabet dismount and kneel.

Asaf Khan

Hail, majesty of India ! (*Rises*).

Mohabet Khan

Hail, our king ! (*Rises*).

Multitude

Hail Shah Jehan ! Hail emperor, hail king !

(*A great hum, drums, &c.*).

Shah Jehan

Hail Asaf, Mohabet, all Agra, hail !

It touches our heart to rock in this ocean gale

Of our rejoicings and your welcome. On,

To the palace, where awaits us our crown.

The sceptre we have earned with victory,

And ever shall it sway in Ind's glory.

Your services shall reap their just reward

With what our kindness and our realm afford,

And all who seek our pardon now receive—

These wars shall be forgot in their reprieve.

Our noble father's death hath thrilled our heart

And pierced our gladness with woe's heavy dart;

But all in all we hope for better days,

For higher policy and power always.

While others ruled our father, we rule ourself

Assist our council, as our council ourself.

Rebels and foes risk both their lives and lands.

There are our guns, and these are our commands ;

Of such like strains anon. To-day our joy,

Mixed as it is with sorrow's sad alloy,

Doth filter through the air to all the skies,

Raising our minds and hearts to where it flies,

Relieving burdens and destroying cares,

And offering for the Empire all their prayers.

Rise in your saddles : move this world along !

Speak music and drums for us -- welcome and song !

Multitude

Hail Emperor of the world ! Hail India's king !

Hail Emperor of the world ! Hail India's king !

*Procession, cheers, music, drums, &c. (Exeunt)*

SCENE 5.—AGRA.

The subterranean dungeons in the Fort

Prince Dawir Buksh's cell.

*Dawir Buksh discovered chained to a beam, jailor at the door—a torch dimly burning.*

Dawir Buksh

Chains for the sceptred hand of Kushru's son !

Dust for the feet that trod the Peacock throne !

Woe for the brow that once upbore a crown !

Gloom for the eyes that viewed a realm's renown !

Snap, vulgar iron ! Free this itching arm

To punish treason.

Jailor

My lord, I'll give the alarm.

Dawir Buksh

Snap, snap !

Jailor

My lord !

Dawir Buksh

Snap, snap, I say.

Jailor

My lord !

Dawir Buksh

Jailor, remove these shackles.

Jailor

Nay, my lord,

I'm paid to keep them there.

Dawir Buksh

I'll double your pay.

For thrice ten years, twice twenty, fifty—

Jailor

Nay.



There is no price can pay a widow's woe,  
 Or orphans' want, if I for treason go  
 Hang on the gibbet. Stay, my lord ! Who's there?

*Enter budmashes.*

1st budmash

Some doctors of the law (*hands warrant*). Is the prince  
 here?

Jailor

(*Reading.*) He is.

Dawir Buksh

What prince?

1st budmash

Prince Dawir Buksh.

Dawir Buksh

Indeed,

There's no such prince.

Jailor

There is in what I read.

1st budmash

You wear his voice.

Dawir Buksh

Is that law?

1st budmash

That is law!

Dawir Buksh

Yet, I'm no prince

2nd budmash

No matter. That too is law;

1st budmash

For you, my lord, by law, are a prisoner.

Dawir Buksh

Back, traitors : stand ! Respect your Emperor;  
 Or come not near.

1st budmash

We come to set you free.

Go, rule the grave (*stabs him*). Go soul, to liberty!

Dawir Buksh

Help ! Murder ! (*Falls*)

2nd budmash

Still ! So now you may not lie ! (*Stabs him*).

Dawir Buksh

Curse ! Cowards !

2nd budmash

Yet ! Now be honest ! (*Stabs him*).

Dawir Buksh

Cowards, I die ! (*Dies*).

1st budmash

You are quite dead, unhappy Emperor !

2nd budmash

Let's off. The children next; then Shuriar ! (*Exeunt*)

Prince Shuriar's cell.

*Shuriar discovered chained to a beam, a jailor by—a torch dimly burning.*

Shuriar

I cannot bear this life of heavy woe :

My blood is poisoned with it sure, though slow.

I'd rather die.

Jailor

But, prince, our lives are short,

Shuriar

When steeped in the crimes and pleasures of our court;

But longer than long ages when in sorrow,

For then each day's a year, each year a morrow.

Jailor

Be patient, prince : all griefs resolve to good.

Shuriar

Ay, when our flesh provides the worms their food.

Your sapience, keeper, cannot comfort me,

One only friend can solace, my mother. See

They give not even her to me. O, God !

The world depends on mothers. Dear mother ! O, God !

Robbed of my father's throne, bequest competed ;

Sans right or reason opposed, defeated,

By mine own brother's—nay my father's—friends ;

And—oh, to think it !—the Shah's ambitious ends

Helped by mine uncle, mine own, less his—O God!  
 How can I wish to live but to die. God! God!  
 Where are the eyes that Nature gave me? Gone!  
 And here I lie in double darkness alone!  
 But, hark those cruel cries! Murder! O, hear,  
 Those wails of deep despair, of death! I fear.  
 O keeper, keeper, who are those that shriek?  
 And yet, methinks I know those sounds. Speak, speak!

Jailor

Prince, know the truth: who shrieked are ere now dead.  
 The blood of Tamerlane this day is shed.

Shuriar

This day? Say night The blood of Timur! Man,  
 You mean my children's! O cruel Shah Jehan!  
 Wizard of woes, blend now my blood with theirs:  
 Do one good deed—save a father from his cares.  
 Keeper, our blood must run to earth that so  
 Secure in his curst veins Shah Jehan's may flow?

Jailor

Soft, prince. I hear the fall of footsteps. Who,  
 In the Emperor's name, come hither—what to do?

*Enter budmashes with a torch.*

1st budmash.

Who, but his servan's; what, but his royal will?  
*Hands the warrant to jailor who reads it in tears.*

Shuriar

Come ye to be my life's masters—to kill?  
 To do dread deeds of darkness—drink my blood?  
 If such your purpose, speak is't ill or good  
 To slay a prince, your king, that by his doom  
 You please a prince, no king till I've a tomb.

2nd budmash

Prince, softly! We're not here merely to name  
 Our duty.

Shuriar

Your speech and deed must be the same.  
 Your swollen voice bespeaks the coarsest vein.  
 Your duty then's the act of a villain!

1st budmash

Breathe your last wishes, prince, if aught's to do  
That loyally to our king, we may, for you.

Shuriar

Who is your king?

1st budmash

He who's on the throne,

And sways the sceptre of this realm.

Shuriar

Mine own!

My throne, my sceptre, my realm, juggled away

By Asaf and Mohabet. Prithee, say.

Are they advanced to honours for their deed,

These traitors to law and love?

Nay, Prince, take heed!

2nd budmash

If you've no wishes—

Shuriar

Yes? You falter! Speak on.

You're cowards, and you cannot! What, if I've none?

2nd budmash

Then, must you die by order of the king!

Shuriar

Keeper, I did despise my life as a thing.

Not worth the living, since mine eyes were gone;

But now I would I had mine eyes, e'en one,

To smite these monsters and to save that life!

My wishes? Can I clasp my sons, my wife!

Help, keeper! I'll not parley with these brutes.

Death to the assassins the imposter deposes!

I'd rather die thus blinded seeking their death,

Than coldly like an ox. To cowards, death!

Death to the fiends who dare insult their king!

*Strikes the wall and is stabbed through the back.*

1st budmash

Then, death! (*Shuriar falls*).

2nd budmash

Then death! (*Stabs him through the heart*).

Shuriar

Allah! Their king! Their king! (*Dies: exeunt budmashes with torch*)

Jailor

Poor princely boy! How could I raise a hand  
To shield you when your death's the king's command?  
Poor lad! Lie straight: accept my last caress.  
If heaven so willed your fate, thee heaven shall bless.

*Enter Asaf and Mohabet*

Asaf Khan

Here was he cast: we may release him hence.  
Being blind, he may yet live in reticence,  
And do no harm. Let's flee him from this land.

Mohabet Khan

The king his death with the others did command.

Asaf Khan

Already? Would the deed is not yet done!  
Shuriar, Shuriar!

Mohabet Khan

Is he then gone?

Jailor

Prince Shuriar is not here, my lords.

Mohabet Khan

How now!

Asaf Khan

How may this be? Speak, sirrah, who art thou?

Jailor

A jailor of the king's.

Asaf Khan

Ay, verily.

Is this his cell?

Jailor

It was!

Asaf Khan

Was! Where is he?

Jailor

God knows, my lord, his soul's in heaven.

Mohabet Khan

What, slain?

Indeed.  
Jailor

Asaf Khan  
Allah ! Already ? Cursed bane !  
Mohabet Khan

Where is he taken ?

Jailor  
(*Lighting torch*) Here lies his princely corpse.

Asaf Khan  
O, Shuridar ! Now ravage, cruel Remorse !

Mohabet Khan  
Asaf, refrain. Jailor, how chanced this doom ?

Jailor (*producing warrant*).  
By cruel law, alas !

Asaf Khan  
'Tis signed. By whom ?

Mohabet Khan  
The Emperor himself !

Asaf Khan  
My heart, now rend !

Boy of high blood, this crime no hand can mend,  
Mohabet Khan

Be firm. The deed's past words. Put by your grief,  
And be your face to Shah Jehan liege and lief.

Asaf Khan  
Weep inward, eyes ! 'Tis the emperor's will ! Poor boy !  
Bleed wounded heart, despoiled of life's dear joy,

And drown me ! Pardon me Heaven, and thou, my child !

Mohabet Khan  
Are the others also stiffened ?

Jailor  
They are piled

In death, in the neighbouring cell.  
Mohabet Khan

O dreadful day !

Asaf Khan  
All, all ? Most fell proscription ! Farewell ! Say  
There is no drop of Baber's proud blood left.  
This noble stock of royalty's all bereft.

Mohabet Khan

Save the Shah and his own progeny, it is.

Asaf Khan

Thus, thus our plots have ploughed success. This, this  
Is our own handiwork !

Mohabet Khan

But courage yet :

Our hopes in the Shah some good fruit shall beget !

Let's see him well interred. Keep your charge, keeper !

Asaf Khan

With reverence watch o'er the martyred sleeper,  
Till we remove him to the damp, dark, tomb—  
From this sad scene to the marble's silent gloom.  
Where weeps, yon monument, outshining Greece  
For wise Itmud-ud-doulah, there in peace  
Where spun by sculpture, in art's magic loom,  
Upheaves embroidered marble, turret and dome;  
Beneath that canopy of snowy lace  
Shall buried be this royal innocent face :  
And when all-welcome death so stills my heart,  
Upon that threshold lay me, in some part,  
That I may have him by my bones though cold  
And rotting. I thank God I'm grown old ! (*Exeunt*).

### ACT III. SCENE 1—AGRA.

The Diwan-i-Khas (with the Peacock Throne).

*Enter Nur Jehan.*

Nur Jehan

O, once entrancing marvel, Jehanghir's throne !  
And being Jehanghir's, therefore twice mine own !  
Your golden base is shattered : and I fall.  
Adieu, sweet reign of love ! Adieu, my all !  
There is no atom left of what I was.  
Jehanghir, giving all my pride its cause,  
Is dead ; my power is past ; I am no more.  
Turn steps to my lord's tomb—turn to Lahore ! (*Exit*).  
(*Flourishes, drums, music, noise of the mob, &c. Flourish and silence*).

*Enter the Emperor Shah Jehan in the royal robes, crowned and garlanded; Arjumand, Banu Begum (gorgeously attired as Empress), Asaf Khan, Mohabet Khan, lords, courtiers, noblemen, attendants, criers, guards, &c. Shah Jehan ascends the throne, seating his Queen by his side—Asaf and Mohabet to right & left, &c.*

Shah Jehan

At last the crown firm on this head doth rest,  
 By right of conquest more than by bequest;  
 That head rests on this body, ripe with law;  
 That body on this throne with ne'er an awe!  
 As at our coronation we confessed,  
 In words of deepest sorrow our blame being dressed,  
 Our father ruled unwisely and unwell:  
 But the voice of duty, more than that truth to tell,  
 Demands that we who such faults do not share  
 Reign so that like blame we too do not bear.  
 But of this no more in our proclamation.  
 Whither its due, reproof or acclamation,  
 Who do not bless the past but curse their day.  
 Therefore, give Jehanghir peace for aye and aye;  
 Revered and loved ere be our father's name,  
 His memory still green, and great his fame.  
 Being needful that this great Empire be saved,  
 So to this throne our way was strangely paved.  
 Your policy and our powers, by Fate conjoint,  
 Forced by successful war their most wise point.  
 What though possession poured such precious blood—  
 It wrought by certain means the general good.  
 And, mark me all, this costly prize we'll guard  
 With the rigour of these sinews fresh and hard;  
 Turn-coats and traitors all alike shall die  
 Ten thousand cruel deaths, or else we lie!  
 Mutiny and sedition suffer pains  
 Unknown in hell, with its sulphur and fiery chains!  
 Yea, mark me all—the lofty and the low—  
 Misuse your power and craft, make king your foe,  
 Misguide your aims, fan new and crude ambitions,  
 And rake the wrath that deals deserved perditions—



Then shall ye feel the power of one so great  
 Who recks no scruple, loss, kingdom, nor fate  
 To trample the disloyal. To traitors, death!  
 Proclaim it there. (*A flourish*).

Crier

Attend! To traitors death

Asaf Khan

Swear, swear by Allah, by his prophet, swear  
 Your oath of firm allegiance.

Crier

All swear!

By Allah and his prophet, to the king of kings  
 We swear till death allegiance in all things,  
 And honour to our sovereign Queen, we swear,  
 Whereunto we are all assembled here.  
 (*Lords, &c., all hold their ears and swear: another flourish*)

Crier (*to the mob*)

By Allah and his prophet, to the king of kings  
 All swear till death allegiance in all things,  
 Whereunto ye are all assembled here,  
 And honour to our sovereign Queen (*a hum*). They swear.

Shah Jehan

And now, fair mistress of this wide Empire,  
 Mumtaz Mahal, our Queen, speak to thy sire  
 What cherished wish is uppermost in thee,  
 That we may grant and seal it, and that we  
 May so commemorate this glorious day  
 And our eternal love. Arjumand, say,  
 And royal, royally desire, lest both stint  
 You, in the measure of my love and its tint,  
 And we, in that we give what is not meet.  
 Ask but the world, the world is at thy feet!

Arjumand

Lord, you have mapped a city soon to be built,  
 Bulwarked like ours, with palaces so gilt,  
 Kissing alike yon stream, in brotherhood  
 With this, through the watery vein of its proud flood:  
 Father you that creation with your name,  
 Proudest of monarchs, and give it your fame,

That Arjumand may thus remembered be.  
My worth is but what you reflect in me.

Shah Jehan

Mumtaz Mahal, fair India's fair Queen!  
Royal's thy mind with modesty serene;  
Royal those ruby lips in wealth and bloom  
To make thy husband's memory thy glory's tomb!  
Each precious shower of coinage from those russet brinks  
Fills our ears' purses as day's gold in the horizon sinks.  
What though we build anew Firozabad  
And name it after us Shahjehanabad:  
May time not thief this honour of us both  
As the past hath e'er done and the present doth?  
And we be divorced of our wedded fame,  
Its walls defaced, and hushed its founder's name?  
Sweet, we shall score this of thy wish one part,  
Adding thereto another from our heart.  
In Jehanabad's palaces, as in these,  
Our souls we'll weave in a dream of luxuries.  
Our reign divide, our fortunes equal share,  
And fashion this proud kingdom for a proud heir.  
E'en thus, in one, thy being with mine assured,  
So dead too, Queen, we will be joint immured;  
But since you'd bide your beauty all in me,  
And I would be immersed but all in thee,  
Know there's a masterpiece in me conceived,  
Transcending All,—than Time e'en longer lived!  
A mighty marble, reared higher than a mast,  
With towers and domes on all their spell to cast,  
A monument of love, and wealth and fame,  
That every dream of man's must put to shame;  
A tomb that echoes glories thine and mine,  
Whose wondrous vault shall harbour spirits divine;  
A miracle of art and grace and purity,  
To dazzle strange eyes and teach humility;  
A breathing wonder; with treasure all ablaze;  
A mystery all ages to amaze.  
A paradise of chisselled fruits and flowers  
Whose jewelled parts grow as in Nature's bowers;

A triumph for aye to live, for all to love,  
 Of a grandeur borrowed from Heaven above!  
 So peerless, in its beauty and its bloom,  
 That it shall grace the skies on the day of doom !  
 This sacred shrine, with many a priceless gem,  
 Shall to thy memory be mausoleum :  
 And as in life, so side by side we'll be  
 When claimed by death from this sphere of royalty.  
 So shall thy glory's tomb be my memory,  
 My memory thine, so both remembered be !  
 Arjumand, thy wish is sad but wholly wise,  
 Prizing no proof of worth that in life lies ;  
 And as you so raise love, so mountain high,  
 We write thy name Muntaz Mahal in the sky !

Arjumand

That pleases me, that pleases my sovereign lord :  
 Longest of lives may Allah to thee afford.

Shah Jehan

Speak, wisest Asaf; aged warrior, speak,  
 What favours severally of us you seek.  
 Love begging proudly poorly hath received;  
 Ask valour ne'er so humbly, 'twill be deceived :  
 For what that kings bestow can truly measure  
 Virtue and worth that human souls so treasure !

Asaf Khan

The tree that claws the earth, swaying hands and head,  
 When the storm is spent, stands listless as if struck dead;  
 Still feeds its branches and still blossoms free,  
 Living in silence the more really :  
 So flourish thou, fast-rooted in thy throne,  
 That erst in wars wast rocked to hold thine own,  
 Nourished by gifts and graces with lasting lease,  
 Reigning o'er thee, as thou o'er us, this peace.  
 Nature that saps thy parts is stronger still  
 Than all the breath of all extraneous ill.  
 Nothing, my king, I crave to gorge my wealth;  
 Honour and high place having, please my health  
 That many a new year I serve your Government.  
 This is the sum and score of my heart's intent.

Mohabet Khan

And my one wish, in this our equal age,  
To help my friend—each statute so to guage,  
In peace and war our policy so to frame,  
That we tune our acts to your illustrious name.  
Relieving you, in your state labours, thus  
We hope to pass our winter : so in us  
Repose your trust in all our duties demand,  
And so let us share the bounty of your hand.

Shah Jehan

This shall be, as it is, as it hath been.  
Highest in all the land, next King and Queen,  
You stand, Asaf and Mohabet, twin brothers in power,  
With equal rights that high above others tower,  
Subject to us and our rule in loyalty,  
Lords over lords, omrahs, and nobility.  
Your counsels, nourishing this kingdom's breadth and  
length,  
Sweet, seasoned, proved and prized, shall be our strength.  
So have we chosen you. Nobles, ye too  
Small seem our props and pillars, so tried and true.  
Be none o'er-fed with pride and authority,  
Or ape the accents of false, majesty.  
Deep in your hearts plant all your vested powers:  
There ripe their fruit—for majesty is ours.  
The kingdom thus we'll rule, the realm control,  
We by our hand, and you within your soul.  
Now for the peoples. They shall have their right,  
But all their freedom be subject to our might.  
If we mistrust you, it follows all is safe.  
The Empire will be healed though your wounds chafe.  
Kings have no joys, fools say, and rule in fear :  
We rule in joy, we say, and know no fear.  
Our power shall be pressed to make it felt,  
Its pressure freed when love your hearts most melt;  
Yet not too much, lest it lose its due respect—  
So ne'er sedition may your hearts infect.  
Ye know what stately burdens an Emperor bears—  
We have the care of each, and all your cares ;

So must you help us, each, or your cause must fail,  
 And all our best endeavours languish pale.  
 On solid grounds shall grow our policy,  
 Strong but consistent : then follows prosperity.  
 'Tis said. Invested with your powers, go  
 Scatter promotions, pays and favours, so  
 That the tongue of the land shall sing in its body.  
 And now apprise us fully what means Lodi ?

Asaf Khan

Descended from the Pathan emperors  
 He eyes the throne.

Mohabet Khan

Faith, that should cost no wars !

Shah Jehan

Offspring of slaves to vie with Timur's blood !  
 Vipers as these we'll crush with all their brood !  
 An Omrah ! Wars ! No fortune shall he reckon.  
 Our father made him commander of the Deccan ;  
 And with these powers he thought in Shuriar's cause  
 To wall up our obstruction.

Asaf Khan

So it was.

Then fell to wise surrender.

Mohabet Khan

So he did.

And last to govern Malwa was he bid.

Shah Jehan

For which this insult and this perjury  
 Are all our thanks. The rebel ! He shall see  
 How far to try us : for him sad royalty !  
 If such were crowned, then royal were treachery.  
 Recall him ; show him disrespect, the knave.  
 He'll have no choice between a throne and grave,  
 Yea, none !

Asaf Khan

He hath already been recalled.

Shah Jehan

Arriving, flatter him till he be galled.

Queen, please thee in the garden, where anon  
I'll after thee. (*Exit Queen with ladies, &c.*)

Disperse the crowd.

Crier

Begone.

Shah Jehan

Go revel, lords: we would be left alone. (*Exeunt lords*).

Lodi to challenge me with this new bone!

This must be madness in him, or,

He courts his ruin if by this he means war.

All chiefs reduced to humble vassalage,

'Tis strange our prowess he should seek to guage.

Asaf Khan

Shall we chill this fever of his soul by scoff?

Shah Jehan

Do so.

Mohabet Khan

His pride's too great to wear it off.

Shah Jehan

What matter! Villain or fool is he who dares

To pluck the royal plume Shah Jehan wears! (*a noise*).

Asaf Khan

Hark! Here he comes!

*Enter Lodi, Mohamed Aziz, Azmut and followers. Re-enter a few omrahs.*

Lodi

All hail your majesty! (*a pause*)

Shah Jehan

Nay rather, "hail your majesty" to thee!

Asaf and Mohabet Khan

Hail!

Omrah

Hail!

Shah Jehan

Comest not in quest of royalty?

Lodi

King, I am here because you summoned me;

But my pride is more than my obedience may be!

Loyal, you have insulted one who bears  
More claims to honour than hang on yon men's hairs !

Shah Jehan

Then Lodi in his own words is a traitor !

(*Azmut draws at the Emperor, a tumult following*).

Mohabet Khan

Guards !

Shah Jehan

Boy, you will answer for this to us later.

Asaf Khan

Ho ! Lead yon king out of the palace-door.

1st Omrah

We reverence thee !

2nd Omrah

And king, thy grace implore !

(*Azmut draws, but turns to the mace-bearer*)

Mace-bearer

(*Advancing to Lodi*)—Away !

Azmut

(*Intervening*)—Stand back !

Mace-bearer

(*Pushing him aside*)—For you, ill-mannered whelp !

Azmut

(*Burying his crease in his throat*) Suffer for that !

Mace-bearer

(*Falling*) Help ! Murder !

All

Ho ! Help ! Help !

(*Two omrahs unsheathe and advance to Lodi*)

*Azmut and Mahomed Aziz on either side of Lodi, armed.*

1st Omrah

Slay treason first !

2nd Omrah

Ay treason !

Lodi

(*Drawing a dagger*).

Cowards, beware !

Stay sons ! Nay, stay ; the both of them I'll dare.

1st Omrah

(*Striking*) First that !

Lodi

(*Parrying*) Then, this! (*1st Omrah falls*).

2nd Omrah

And this!

Lodi

And that for you! (*2nd Omrah falls*).

Mohabet Khan

I'll challenge him!

Asaf Khan

And I!

Shah Jehan

He'll have his due.

Lodi

Come Azmut, let's away: come followers all!

Or they shall rue this, or shall Lodi fall!

(*Exit Lodi, Azmut, Mahomed Aziz, etc., guards at their heels.*)

Asaf Khan

Seize the traitors!

Mohabet Khan

Murderers! Rebels!

Shah Jehan

Nay, let pass.

The serpent hath been humoured from the grass.

These threats, that we commanded in this dolt,

Show promise of a soon-provoked revolt.

The frog may bloat: he'll burst within the hour;

And so shall others feel our crushing power.

Had not coward Catiline's conspiracy

A Crassus and a Cæsar's sympathy?

We have our Catiline: we need to find

The men of Crassus and of Cæsar's mind—

The craven crows with appetites for pride,

And livers that thirst for power's wine inside.

*Re-enter guards.*

Doth his majesty vouchsafe any word?

1st Guard

Hail, gracious king! He stalks in rage absurd,



Ravaging his lips in fury with his teeth—  
In all his looks and airs strong passions seethe.

Shah Jehan

So struts the fool. What more?

2nd Guard

So hies he home—

Shah Jehan

From which ere long to the other world he'll roam—

Guard

His sons imploring him to seize the city,  
To right their wrong.

Shah Jehan

Prepare! Show them no pity.

Demand at once ample securities,

Keys and accounts of Malwa's treasures.

Despatch to them our law "To traitors death!"

Pronouncing them base rebels with hot breath.

In fine, bid them our puissance beware.

So now to pleasure: bury these with care. (*Pointing to the slain*).

'Tis time enough to plan when Lodi comes.

Ho, music, there! Sound all the biggest drums!

(*Exeunt*).

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#### SCENE 2.—AGRA

The Emperor's drawing room in the palace.

*Shah Jehan and Abdullah at chess: the board of black and white marble inlaid with flowers and gems; the pieces jewelled; and the frame work of solid gold. Ministers, lords, officers, courtiers, &c., regaling themselves. Golden goblets of Shiraz wine on sumptuous tables, &c. Rose-water fountains playing—gardens in view.*

Shah Jehan

This is a play of policy in war

Abdullah

The king of games is worthy an emperor.

Shah Jehan

Think you to worst me, general, on the board?

Abdullah

Nay, that had meant my mutiny, good my lord.  
I mere but measure my dullness with your skill.

Shah Jehan

Sweet loyalty and grace! Come, drink this fill.  
Love, fortune and glory to loyal and to brave!

Abdullah

Say I, God bless our king and country and God save!

All

Health to his majesty! Long live the king!  
Long live his majesty! Health to the king!

Shah Jehan

These powers fight for Pathan royalty,  
E'en Lodi; yours for me—so loyalty  
Abides in you, while I am contrary,  
Being myself, myself's adversary.

Abdullah

Wage we the war.

*(They play.)*

1st Lord

I wager the Emperor wins.

2nd Lord

Well said! By victory against himself he sins.  
If he lose, he wins; if he win, he loses: so  
Whichever way, he vanquishes his foe.

1st Lord

Stay then—Abdullah loses.

2nd Lord

The jest's the same.

Defeat and victory are masked in the game.

1st Lord

Malicious misprision! Well, Lodi wins.

2nd Lord

Treason most thoughtless! So the subject sins.

1st Lord

*Jehanum* take your wits! Look, I am right.

2nd Lord

Nay, Lodi falls, though stubborn is the fight.

Shah Jehan

Pawn queens. A queen and rook against two rooks:  
you're fated!

Abdullah

Rook for your queen. Pardon, your majesty, you're mated!

Shah Jehan

Ah! True, indeed! I never thought to fall.

Abdullah

Nor hast, my lord.

Shah Jehan

Forsooth!

2nd Lord

No whit at all.

Rebel, re-swear allegiance to the throne.

1st Lord

I never was forsworn, fair fool, I own.

Lodi but fell in the cause of the Emperor.

2nd Lord

Forbear who swore "the Emperor wins the war."

Shah Jehan

You flute the air and jangle its harmony,

Lords: tune your lips to dulcimer symphony.

Abdullah, for your success, this royal reward.

Divert your calculation to this board.

Here's marble beaming white and lustrous black,

Sunk to the edge in its gold-chested back,

Spread like a field with all this flowered wealth

That well may purchase happiness and health;

In each bed-a gem, and in each planted piece,

Harmonious, proud, effulgent, past all price.

As many conquering pieces as you see

Around the strand of victorious majesty,

Press this poor king, and him in capture hem,

With the squares they mark, so many each such gem

Of equal kind and worth, shall grace your skill.

Abdullah

My lord, my loyalty's doubled by your will.

Shah Jehan

To the rest assembled here, these trifles. (*scatters coins*)

Wine, there!

Raise high your spirits all: be all of cheer.

*Enter Eradut Khan*

Shah Jehan

Hail, General! Why so tardy?

Eradut Khan

All hail, king!

My time was lent to sudden duty. Being  
With Lodi's humour much of late engrossed,  
Mine eyes on every thought of his focussed,  
I bear a load of news.

Shah Jehan

Enchant our ears!

Doth the rebel hope to chill our hearts with fear,  
That erst were warmed with cheering liquid fire!

Courtier

Most like such heat will melt such ice.

Shah Jehan

Transpire!

Eradut Khan

Enclosed in his all ill-defended walls.  
To his three hundred followers he calls,  
"Seek we," he cries, "some shelter more secure  
Until our further plans we may mature".  
But ere his pregnant mind begot the deed,  
Lo, his rebellion found s'ill stronger seed.  
Loud from his harem rang the shrieks of death,  
That cried for freedom, purchased with life's breath,  
There lay his women, weltering in their blood,  
Where Lodi stood, fearful in gaze and mood!  
They prized not life: death claimed them in despair,  
Lest chains and deep dishonour be their share.  
Each, with a dagger growing in her breast,  
Slew in her heart her womanly unrest.  
Straight at the sight—his fury what could vie!  
With vows of vengeance, lo, Lodi doth fly!

Courtier

Such fools deserve no pity.

Officer

Rather than we, Lodi himself should fret.

Shah Jehan

What might he threat?

Eradut Khan

Mounting his steed, fiercely he summons his sons;

And all his horsemen forthwith follow with guns.

'Mid blaring trumps, then, parting Lodi cries,

Aiming his angry words into the skies:—

“I will awake the tyrant with the sound

Of my departure; but e'en as the hard ground,

When earth reels in a fit—so, let him learn,

Full sure shall he tremble at my return”.

Shah Jehan

Still vaunts the madman?

1st Lord

And bids us fear his flight?

2nd Lord

Such gallantry but ill accords with might.

Shah Jehan

Have hounds been set to chase the flying deer?

Eradut Khan

Your majesty, they have. Lo, news comes here,

E'en at the very brink of our desire.

*Enter messenger.*

Messenger

Hail, king! Hail noblemen of the empire!

Eradut Khan

What tidings come?

Messenger

Our men are all returned,

And wonder at the lesson they have learned.

Swift as the deer that bounds, as lightning sweeps,

Vanish the rebel steeds across plains, o'er steeps,

Out-facing our pursuit. At last they gain

The whirling Chumbul, whose waters ripe with rain

Bar all the country. Not a thought they give

To life or limb, but valiantly they dive

Deep in the stream that rushes with the wind  
In haste precipitate—steed and human kind—  
Dashing and splashing reach the shore ahead,  
Appeasing the flood with multitudes of dead.  
The breezes bear his followers' drowning cries :  
Yet Lodi bides no stay, but onward flies.

Shah Jehan

They have escaped us, all but the drowned ?

Messenger

Save one.

Azmut, your majesty, was slain : else none.

Shah Jehan

The wretch who dared his king deserves to die,  
Without the company of one corpse by !  
What of the bridge ?

Messenger

We should have set that way,

But that the girders all in ruins lay,  
Asleep on the bosom of the surging stream.

Shah Jehan

Order our masons there with brick and beam. (*Exit mess.*)

Shah Jehan

Mark, Generals ! Should the rest be not mown  
In battle all, their prisoners must drown !

A forlorn hope we fear, unless they're mad—

For maniacs e'en such fate is scarce too sad.

This praise, Eradut Khan, for freeing the land  
Of Lodi's most vexatious rebel band ! (*Gives coins.*)

Bear now our hearts to our fair deity,

And oblate time to sweet society.

Love turns troubled thoughts in worship to the fair;

Let Love's religion sanctify our air.

Women were made to bless men and to save :

Were women not, men's hopes were in their grave (*Exeunt*)

SCENE 3.—MALWA.

A battlefield near Malwa : Shah Jehan's camp. (*Persian  
carpets, Cashmere draperies, Chinese silk purdahs, &c.*)

*Enter Shah Jehan, Mohabet Khan, generals, &c.*

Shah Jehan

How Delhi and Agra moved with us along,  
Thick as a forest, with miles of men in throng,  
Sinking beneath a million tramping feet  
The ground, and the awed winds gnashing their teeth!  
And ere we camp, fresh from our buoyant ride,  
Lodi's armed thousands full in the field abide—  
Seduced, their virgin loyalty to our crown,  
And braving Royalty's indignant frown.  
There file his forces borrowed from the Deccan,  
Their dead and wounded in this war to reckon.  
Hence, generals, to the fray : you have our plans. (*Exit*  
generals).

Extinguish, blood, this flame ambition fans !

Mohabet Khan

The forces of the insurgents are combined.

Shah Jehan

For which our troops are in three columns lined,  
Each five and twenty thousand. Can you say  
What sort of rebels seek to die this day?

Mohabet Khan

Viziapur, Golconda and the Nizam's ranks  
Link Lodi's cause.

Shah Jehan

For what is this their thanks?

Mohabet Khan

For what they deem oppression.

Shah Jehan

Base thought unkind!

'Tis not our power, but their disloyal mind,  
Their ragged independence to Baber's crown,  
Their guilty conscience that so drags them down.  
The Crassuses and Cæsars of our troubled times  
Are these, who plague our Rome with their perfidious  
crimes !

They'll rue their rash resolve. This vexes us :

I'll not to field, that calm and certain, thus,

My thoughts in battle and my sword in camp,  
 I'll so that all their sinews we shall cramp;  
 They feel their fate, and others yet in the schools  
 Learn of their very book how suffer fools! (*guns*).  
 Lo, Eradut Khan opens fire! ... Good! . Good!  
 Raj Gopal presses...Shaista attacks...Flow, blood,  
 At every point we probe with bow and blade! (*guns*).  
 Boom, guns, and prove how strong our power was made.  
 Mohabet, see! (*guns*).

Mohabet Khan  
 The smoke obscures the sight.  
 Shah Jehan

Indeed, they clash all in a general fight. (*guns: exeunt*).

Lodi's Camp.

*Enter Lodi as generalissimo, Viziapur, Golconda, the  
 Nizam and Mahomed Aziz*

Viziapur  
 We have the better of the fight so far.  
 Golconda

(*Aside*)—So far!

Nizam  
 No cross our fortune yet doth mar.  
 Lodi

Nor can, if each with valour perseveres.

Mahomed Aziz  
 Great princes, thus united, have no peers.  
 Lodi

Now set your war-hounds to the panting prey!  
 To swords! Mahomed, lead! All, all to the fray!  
 (*Exeunt: guns*).

*Re-enter Viziapur, Golconda and Nizam.*

Nizam  
 Princes, how stand your thoughts upon this scene?  
 Viziapur  
 Mine but depressed and diffident, I ween.  
 Golconda  
 Your thought and mine were twins: I watch the tide.  
 Nizam  
 So I. In one communion we abide.



Fasten our tongues, give eyes their liberty.  
 Ourselves are dear. We side with victory! (*Exeunt: guns*).  
*Re-enter Lodi with Mahomed Aziz and a few horsemen.*

Lodi

Fight for our right, your freedom, all ye brave!  
 Fight till ye lower the usurper in his grave!  
 Avenge the mother of Sultan Ibrahim,  
 Captived and robbed by Baber! Avenge the crime!  
 (*They brush by in an uproar—guns,—re-enter as before.*)

Mahomed Aziz

Onward, yet onward! Valour and skill prevail!  
 We break their several ranks! Onward! They quail!  
 (*Exeunt—uproar—guns*)

Shah Jehan's Camp.

*Enter Shah Jehan and Mohabet Khan—(Guns).*

Shah Jehan

We should have news ere now.

*Enter Asaf Khan.*

Asaf Khan

(*Guns*).

Your Majesty,

The generals are baffled!

Shah Jehan

What! Baffled! Why?

Asaf Khan

Their line is strong: our men have lost their ground.  
 Lodi fights skillfully. His guns resound.

Shah Jehan

Combine our troops—and—stay—the game is yours!  
 Take you command of all. Speed, uncle ours!

(*Exit Asaf Khan—guns*).

Mohabet, is this well?

Mohabet Khan

Most royal well.

'Twere better among the foe this news to swell.

Shah Jehan

True. Hither, sirrah! (*Enter messenger*).—

Sound the news aloud,

That Asaf Khan, our uncle, brave and proud—

E'en thus—commands the action. Spread alarm!

*(Exit messenger)*

Bring news of this, what good it doth or harm.

*(Exit Mohabet—guns).*

If now my power is wrecked, how shall it be?

O bilious thought, Lodi, and royalty!

Let but the slave advance to view my crown,

This hand shall hurl him to the dust, down, down!

Lodi, beware! Since Shah Jehan you dare,

Our chroniclers shall say:—"So Lodi did fare!

Brave though he was, more fool he was than brave.

Thieving a throne he earned a rebel's grave.

For the hand of Shah Jehan dealt fortune and fate—

Fate to the unworthy, and fortune to the great". *(Guns).*

*Re-enter Mohabet Khan*

Mohabet Khan

The terror that Asaf's name hath bred ere now

Brings Golconda's entreats of peace.

Shah Jehan

Peace, how?

Mohabet Khan

In his surrender. *(Enter a messenger.)*

This, his messenger.

Shah Jehan

The foe retreat?

Mohabet Khan

They fight, but must defer.

Shah Jehan

We grant Golconda terms. Folly ends thus.

There are more fools in fight. Go: this from us.

*(Exit messenger:—guns).*

Lodi's camp.

*Enter Lodi, Mahomed Aziz and followers, and pass on.*

Lodi

Forward!

Followers

Strike!

Mahomed Aziz

Hold your own!

Lodi

Regain lost ground!

Lodi

Afghans against cowards! Boom! Let the air resound

(*Exeunt*)

*Re-enter as before.*

Lodi

Fall back, brave followers, left alone to fight!

Golconda's loss to us is nothing slight.

We will not trust like cut-throats with our lives,

For they no less will scruple to forge our gyves!

Mahomed Aziz

Indeed, my father, vile Viziapur

And the Nizam, too, have gone. (*Guns*)

Lodi

Curse from my core!

Therefore, since now the Moghul forces press,

Let's respite in some high-country recess.

Such dangers threaten everywhere around,

Where faithless friends and coward foes abound.

Come, gallant soldiers, honourably fly.

Discretion bids the valourous not to die. (*Exeunt*).

Shah Jehan's Camp.

*Enter Shah Jehan, Mohabet Khan and messenger.*

Messenger

Lodi hath fled into the country.

Shah Jehan

So?

Shut all the passes lest he escape—and go,

Bid Abdullah pursue the turn-tail wretch,

Until his corpse upon the plain he stretch. (*Exit mess.*)

Mohabet Khan

He cannot miss him. Now his fate's secure.

Shah Jehan

Ten thousand cavalry he'll scarce endure.

Mohabet Khan

That is, indeed, Abdullah's strength.

Shah Jehan

Away!

And gather all the camp: we've won the day.

Mohabet Khan

I will, my lord.

(Exit).

Shah Jehan

So ends Lodi's ambition.

It's fire bath shed the ashes of perdition.

Lodi's Camp.

*Enter Lodi and followers. (Guns).*

Lodi

They are upon us! Rally, my thirty brave!

Ye are my empire, or my empire's grave!

Mahomed fell contesting our retreat.

Reck not their hordes! Avenge him in their defeat!

(*They pass on—guns.*)

*Re-enter as before.*

Lodi

O men of mighty hearts, who so face death! (*Guns*).

This war hath robbed me of my sons' sweet breath.

Ye fill their place: ye draw their father's love!

Now where ten thousand hawks around us move. (*Guns*).

No longer stay ye to be ravaged all:

Nor couple with my fallen cause your fall!

Seek each your safety: bear my love away,

And let it live with you, not die this day.

My thanks to you and to the valiant dead,

Who dared all dangers to defend their head.

Go all. Be wise. There's time. (*Guns*). I beg but this,

Let my soul and body give their farewell kiss!

(*Followers in tears.*)

Follower

Never, brave leader!

All

Never!

Follower

Where falls Lodi—  
There also, shielding him our swords—(*Guns*).

All

—Fall we! (*Guns*).

*Lodi silently gives the signal to follow, and spurs his horse against the enemy—exeunt—guns*.

Shah Jehan's Camp

*Enter Shah Jehan and Mohabet, with the surrendered princes, nobles, generals, etc.*

Shah Jehan

This is strange silence! Send again for news.

What is the issue of this encounter, I muse?

Mohabet Khan

Lo, here they come.

*Enter Asaf, Fradut and Abdullah.*

All three

Hail Emperor!

Asaf Khan

All is ours!

Shah Jehan

Hail, Asaf, leader of our conquering powers!

Hail, Generals! How fared your expedition?

Asaf Khan

Too fortunately in the foes' perdition.

Nizam

*(Aside to Viziapur & Golconda)* Shudder, Princes, at the word, and mark the doom,

That but for an hour had rumbled o'er our tomb!

Viziapur *(Aside)*

Indeed, we saved our ears to sound its depth!

Golconda *(Aside)*

And eyes and tongues that else had cursed and wept!

Asaf

Lodi most nobly fought, and all his men

Fell, sword in hand, encircling their chief, when

A ball from us pierced deep through his proud breast,

Giving him Death's and us Life's happy rest.

Shah Jehan

Glorious Asaf, Eradut, Abdullah  
Never bore tidings more triumphant! (*A noble in tears*)  
Ha!

This woman weeps for Lodi: our hearts show  
Small sympathy for such a fallen foe.  
Men's hearts are true; men are no crocodiles  
To crush an enemy and cry the whites.  
Fool, dry your eyes, or let your widow weep  
That for their treason our hangman puts them to sleep.  
Rebellion that came from Malwa to Agra  
Re-travelled to its doom from Agra to Malwa.  
Thus peace is now assured to us once more.  
Ho there! Sound all our praises! (*Cheers*)

Sound encore! (*Cheers*).

Order the camp—march back to Agra all,  
Where spoils and awards shall reach both great and  
small;

Music and mirth flood all the brimming land;  
And pageants shows and plays shine ne'er so grand!

Asaf Khan

So flourish we in peace as triumph in war.  
Long live the Empire! Live the Emperor!

All

Long live the Empire! Live the Emperor!  
Long live the Empire! Live the Emperor! (*Exeunt*).

SCENE 4.—DELHI.

The Diwan-i-Khas in the Palace decorated and illumin-  
ated in colours; refreshment tables with golden  
goblets and wine; every pomp and splendour;  
• rose-water fountains playing—the Peacock

Throne in the centre.

*Enter Shah Jehan, Arjumand (laden with jewels), Asaf,  
Mohabet, lords, officers, nobles of court and state,  
ladies, musicians and dancing girls, &c.*

## Shah Jehan

*(Scattering coins as he speaks)*

Shine glorious queen, the sun of th's jewelled scene,  
 Where all is Nature clanging its grateful pae!  
 Fair flowers of purest odour and grace  
 Bloom all the voluptuous beauty of each face!  
 Lords, nobles—all our glittering court and state,  
 Swell the ocean of our pride and powers great!  
 Charm, dainty damsels, your invisible feet  
 To wondrous flights! Timbrels, flow music sweet,  
 And through the channels of our eager ears  
 Pour your liquid melody and murmuring cheers,  
 Down to our soul! Rain, sparkling Shiraz, around;  
 Ripe the seeds of joy in each heart's tender ground,  
 Till richest harvests store our merry minds!  
 Roll on, sweet summer; revel ye wanton winds!  
 But stay, stay Time, and marvel at these sights,  
 That ages swoon at news of their delights!  
 The happiest eras in the history of man  
 Melt in one birthday of *Badshah* Shah Jehan!

## Arjumand

To my sovereign lord, I pray the heavens bestow  
 All love may wish in his royal heart to glow!

## Ladies

Joy to our gracious Emperor and Queen!

## Asaf Khan

Whose love be ever lucent and fame ever green!

## Lords, &amp;c.

Long live the Emperor! Long live the Queen!  
 God bless the Emperor! God bless the Queen!

---

*Shah Jehan and Queen, followed by Asaf, Mohabet, &c.,  
 proceed to the "royal weighing"*

Citizens outside, in encores of exultation  
 Long live the Emperor! Long live the Queen!  
 God bless the Emperor! God bless the Queen!

## 1st lord

The multitudes without have caught the strain,

2nd lord

Nay, the festive city roars its own refrain.

1st lord

I warrant but that some have scaled the walls.

2nd lord

What, they whom the Emperor's majesty appals!

1st lord

Ay! All their dread is fast asleep this day ;  
And the very power they fear now makes all gay.

1st lady

There never was a time of triumph like this.

1st lord

There is where woman's smiles still scatter bliss.

2nd lady

Never were jewels known to blaze as these.

2nd lord

Women are jewels that light men's destinies.

1st lady

Man's flattery makes a million smiles a day.

2nd lady

To avarice, gems hell-ward pave the way.

*(Music and dance).*

Shah Jehan

Since last we held our anniversary  
Our royal weight hath much increased, we see.  
To-day eight thousand *tolas* in rupees,  
Sixteen hundred *chittaks* in jewelleries,  
A hundred *seers* in rich stuffs and in spice,  
And five half *maunds* in butter, meal and rice,  
Have severally poised the scales with royalty.  
Whereas we've scored so much in quantity,  
Subjects, beware our heavier Majesty!  
It seats us on our throne more mightily,  
Weighs down our foot to crush each rebel head,  
And hardens our sinews to stretch foes dead!  
Our heart grows larger, and our mind expands,  
While even our wealth grows lighter in our hands!



*(Empties two boxes of rubies and gold and silver almonds, diamonds, &c., on the floor. The omrahs scramble. Music and dance).*

1st Omrah

Lord, how it rains and lightens!

2nd Omrah

Here diamonds snow.

3rd Omrah

And this is pearled hail.

4th Omrah

A volcano

Bursts here with the roaring rubies' lurid glare.

5th Omrah

Rather an avalanche, welcome and fair.

6th Omrah

Nay, every where a deluge.

7th Omrah

Promiscuous war

Of flashing jewels, the sport of an Emperor.

*Enter Kings of Bijapur, Golconda, the Nizam, Viziapur—  
—who proceed to the king. Music.*

1st lord

Who are these kingly guests that now arrive—

The purple bees of our great empire's hive?

2nd lord

This the most noble, valiant Bijapur:

These Golconda, the Nizam, Viziapur,

Who late for Lodi raised their rebel arms

Against us—

1st lord

But surrendered in alarms!

*Enter Malik Amber, going to the Emperor.*

2nd lord

And lo, the swarthy Malik Amber comes

Who, too, in mutiny once thundered his drums.

*Enter various other rajahs and chiefs, and pass on.*

1st lord

Yet more and more, like ocean waves they pour.

Each witness of the power of our Emperor.  
 How great and solemn is this gathering,  
 A conqueror's court with many a subject king!

Shah Jehan

Most welcome, mighty limbs of our Empire!  
 For your congratulations, thanks warm as fire.  
 Content and honoured is our heart supreme :  
 Our dreams shall shape this joy—this joy's a dream.  
 Most welcome, welcome! All we welcome so.  
 Ah Bijapur, is aught that we should know?

Bijapur

Hark thee, aside, I pray your Majesty.

Shah Jehan

Come, if you will. Beseech their amnesty.  
 Roll on, our revels : more festive grow, the feast!  
 Flutter, sweet passions : glow, souls, at Pride's behest!  
*The Emperor and Bijapur withdraw aside—rajahs and  
 chiefs converse with the ministers, nobles, &c. Music,  
 dance, bumpers, &c.*

Shah Jehan

Who is this hero dares to make you sad?

Bijapur

A regal, yet a mere adventurous lad;  
 With no resources, but in strange unrest.  
 His name is Shivaji—his blood the best,  
 Of proud Mahrattas, drawn from Oodeypore,  
 Though mixed through caste with some inferior;  
 His father's in my service, and commands  
 Tanjore and the Carnatic of my lands :  
 But the son has trained himself a daring chief,  
 In a strange mixture of warrior and thief.

Shah Jehan

This picture of your fear doth displease us :  
 These signs and symptoms prove a genius.  
 For this you seek advice. Keep in your eye  
 His father. Such is a son's best surety;  
 Be liberal, but cautious more. In all,  
 Your weapon is to hold him in your thrall.

Bijapur

I thank your high and royal courtesy  
For this wise counsel.

Shah Jehan

Now to join the glee.

Why lingers Bundelkhund?

Bijapur

Myself would know.

Nizam

He may yet come.

Shah Jehan

That kindness were too slow! (*Music and dance*).

Shah Jehan

How hath my Queen squandered her joy this night?

Arjumand

As ne'er she did before: all is so bright!

And her sweet lord, how he?

Shah Jehan

List, Arjumand!

The resplendent glory that halos Shah Jehan,  
Lives but its little hour, then fades and dies;  
But the beaming beauty of your limpid eyes  
Always joys his soul. Heaven nourish still thy charms;  
And let my love e'er live in beauty's arms.  
Think not I flatter: for love like mine ne'er dies,  
Though in the tomb love's flower withering lies.  
But oh, the cruel thought! It kills these joys,  
And of a peerless mother robs our budding boys,  
Fade not, my Cashmere rose, my *Kohinur*!  
Be testimony of me gone before!  
Such morbid shades too much obtrude on me:  
So my soul sorrows, so trembles love's royalty!

Arjumand

My lord, your spirit tires. Rest thee awhile.

Shah Jehan

Ay, Queen, so smother my care with thy sweet smile.

(*Exeunt Shah Jehan and Arjumand—music—curtain*).

SCENE 5.—AGRA.

The Diwan-i-Am or public hall of audience.

*Enter Asaf Khan, Mohabet, lords of the senate and state, &c.*

Asaf Khan

'Tis close upon the hour of the court.

Here are some matters of grave and great import

For our most wise and glorious Emperor.

Mohabet Khan

His Majesty should now appear.

Asaf Khan

This more :

Our counsels need be ne'er so strong, mark you.

1st lord

He rules with firmness and with justice.

Mohabet Khan

True.

In Jehanghir's times, frolics and flippancies

Gambolled their day and made men fools : in these

True royalty in sternness holds her sway ;

As the sun ascendant rules the stainless day.

2nd lord

The haughty *subadhars* are overawed.

3rd lord

The peoples happy.

Mohabet Khan

He governs like a god.

4th lord

The famines too, to which all lands are prone,

He stayed by largess such as ne'er was known.

Mohabet Khan

His sternest temper harbours in it good ;

And this long peace hath saved the country blood.

What though his eyes keep guard upon our power,

Let's so, that us he with his trust may dower.

Asaf Khan

Ay so : yet smoothe the rigour of his laws,

Or suck their softness where there's stately cause.

Be kings never so wise, they're human still,  
 And often err against their wanton will.  
 We are his conscience; we guide him on his way,  
 Watch o'er his faults; and for his strength we pray.  
 Here comes the subject of our thoughts.

*Enter Shah Jehan with his four sons. Drums.*

Lords

Hail! Hail

Asaf Khan

Hail!

Mohabet Khan

Hail, your Majesty and princes.

Shah Jehan

*(Takes the imperial chair, his sons around)* All hail!  
 If we omit the sabred flames that felled  
 The capital of Bengal, e'en now quelled,  
 How fares the kingdom since we last convened?

Asaf Khan

As fares fair weather when from tempests weaned,  
 Excepting trivial flaws of cloud and rain,  
 Such as these papers argue.

*Enter Rajah of Bundelkhund's lawyer.*

Shah Jehan

What is main?

Asaf Khan

This crime of Bundelkhund in prosecution.

Shah Jehan

I've thought on that—his sentence, execution!

Lawyer

Your majesty, the cause admits excuse.

Mohabet Khan

Rather, 'twere policy to wink at the abuse.

Shah Jehan

How say you so, Mohabet? Did not we  
 Lead armies here and there in policy,  
 The petty princes' bondage to assure?  
 The sentence stands.

Mohabet Khan  
To kill were not to cure.

Lawyer  
I pray, your majesty, one day postpone  
The judgment.

Asaf Khan  
If not the crime some part condone.

Shah Jehan  
Whence is the wisdom of our counsellors?  
We fatten with peace, and broil our brains in wars.  
Advance this plaint—you count his guilt, yet spare.

Asaf Khan  
'Tis here, my liege.

Mohabet Khan  
My Lord, our politic care  
Lies in our wisest mercy.

Shah Jehan  
Mercy for treason!

Mohabet Khan  
That heavenly virtue triumphs o'er armed reason.  
Nature that cursed the soil of Bikanir,  
And doomed the wanderer to pain and fear,  
Thirst and starvation, who braves that spread of sand,  
Cursed with her tongue, yet blesses with her hand.  
Compassion in her soul, she stops to think—  
Bids there the water-melon, food mixed with drink,  
In mercy to the man, who hopes to slake  
His burning thirst in yonder brimming lake.  
The mirage of the desert melts in air,  
Symbol of hope forerunning man's despair.  
The traveller turns his agony to tears,  
When lo, the mercy of a melon appears!  
Nature, man's commissary in God's cause,  
And thou, God's *subadhar*, trustee of laws,  
Derive your duties from the very source  
Of every mercy. Then, mercy be thy course,  
That men of proudest mould may homage thee,  
And from the Himalayas praise Divinity!

Shah Jehan

Ah, well: let justice have mercy's excuse:  
Be it mercy as you say; but guard the abuse.

Mohabet Khan

Most gracious king!

Asaf Khan

This royal deed will shine,  
And all the land will hymn "mercy is thine"!

Shah Jehan

We pardon Bundelkhund in kindness so  
That none demand it—let the kingdom know.

Lawyer

Great Judge and Emperor of Hindustan,  
Thy kindness will pierce the hardest heart in man,  
But not the tenderest woman will presume,  
That grace a fixed necessity. The doom  
Revoked by mercy is the herald cry,  
That justice follows in might and majesty.  
Then hold me not the first transgressor in the abuse,  
If I beseech that Bundlekhund be given the use;  
Of his old powers, his *gadi*, and signet-ring.  
Show justice to mercy, most merciful just king!

Shah Jehan

Restore the prince to his full dignity!

Lawyer

Thus should he prove a life-long friend to thee.  
Through me my princely client's gratitude  
Pledges your majesty with love renewed. (*Exit*)

Shah Jehan

What are these next? Hindu absurdities!  
Rapacious gods, vile priests, and sinful orgies!  
Take the *maharajas* by their legs and burn them first,  
Who paint religion a fury from hell accursed.  
If that their husbands dead, they tire their fattened  
wives,  
Hang every man and franchise female lives.

Asaf Khan

My lord, 'tis hard to persecute the brave.

Shah Jehan

How brave? Me, from such valour, my stars save!  
How call you brave these limbs of a cankered creed?

Asaf Khan

They're brave who with conviction join their deed.

Shah Jehan

Convince them, then, what's truth and what is folly,  
And let us have no more things melancholy.

Asaf Khan

Each hath his truth and folly. Few have truth.

Shah Jehan

Indeed, wise uncle, few—too few, forsooth!  
That you would make us *maharajas* there is alarm.

Asaf Khan

They revere their ritual and do no harm.

Shah Jehan

Well, well; go tolerate them as you please,  
That *Allah* laugh the more, the more he sees!

*(Enter at a corner a man and woman in dispute.)*

What is the quarrel of this couple: sure  
They seek some madness by this court to cure?

Man

You heartless mother!

Woman

You devil's son!

Crier

Silence!

Man

You cheat!

Woman

You villain, you rogue, you thief!

Crier.

Silence!

Man

My suit! My suit!

Crier

Silence!

Man

Deal with my suit!



Asaf Khan

Ho! Quell that clamour. Ho!

Man

My—

Crier

Silence, brute!

Asaf Khan

This is their action. This woman's husband's dead;  
While she to this, her son, refuses—so 'tis said—  
His fortune.

Shah Jehan

How much?

Asaf Khan

Herein named—

Mohabet Khan

Two lacs.

Shah Jehan

The burden's too great for one pair of backs.  
What is the cause?

Asaf Khan

The son's misconduct.

Shah Jehan

So,

On wanton grounds unlawful greed doth grow.

Pay to the son one quarter, one half to us:

To the woman all the rest—we rule it thus,

(*Woman presses*). Out-cast her hence! (*She clamours*).

Justice is done—away!

What seek you still?

Woman

A word, my lord, I pray.

My son, may't please your majesty,

Whether by law or human equity,

Hath certainly some claim to his father's gold;

But what relation, I would fain be told,

Doth your majesty to the merchant bear,

My deceased husband, that makes you his heir?

Shah Jehan

(*Aside*) Quaint argument and apt!—Woman, you know  
I am your husband's king: know you also,  
Since parents are guardians of their offsprings,  
Both subject to their Emperor in all things,  
How ill-considered is your very act.  
Go, share it with your child—the sum's intact.

Asaf Khan

Thus wisdom ends the business of the day.

Shah Jehan

'Tis well. Flow stream of peace for aye and aye.  
Crime's on a holiday this time of year,  
And, therefore, lawyers: methinks there's room to fear,  
If long they so remain, they'll meet and turn to friends,  
Lawyers will be suppressed, and criminals at wits' ends.  
What are our further conquests? Kandahar  
And Balk have yielded nothing with the war?

Asaf Khan

Yea, Persian prudence, sire, is all-in-all:  
'Twere at great cost they could be made to fall.

Mohabet Khan

Those regions proved too rude to our invasion,  
And conquest was doomed to repeated evasion.  
Meanwhile with Sefi we are now at peace;  
And war's hostilities on all sides cease.  
The Usbeck Tartars, after nine months' fight,  
Yield Ghazni, Bamia, and the Cabul heights.

Shah Jehan

Is this chart of the Empire comprehensive?

Asaf Khan

'Tis so.

Shah Jehan

Including Assam.

Mohabet Khan

'Tis extensive!

Shah Jehan

So that our enemies are far away,  
Let joy and plenty bless our honoured sway.

Come Dara, Shujah, Aurungzebe, Murad, nigh.  
Ye are the idols of the peoples' eye,  
Of parts and manners that themselves commend,  
For which we now reward you to this end.  
Fill you these places, severally, each.  
Dara, predestined both to rule and teach,  
Abide by us and, in our Government,  
Aid so that reigning you copy our intent.  
Your valour and your grace, your rectitude  
And high intelligence join without feud.

Dara

Your praises, royal father, wax too rich  
For one so poor in their deserts ; for which  
Thanking you from my heart, your will I obey,  
And for your kingly guidance humbly pray.

Shah Jehan

Fond son. Brave Shujah, you, of our states all,  
Receive from us the rule of wide Bengal.

Shujah

I shall, my lord, as fits a prince's state,  
Aim ever to prolong the Empire's date.

Shah Jehan

Good. Murad, proud, magnificent and daring,  
Delighting in war, and every danger sharing,  
Command you Guzerat.

Murad

As't pleases my sire.  
Emperors' sons should help to hold their empire.

Shah Jehan

Too true. And last of all, in worth not least,  
Aurungzebe, student of state and holy feast,  
Head of the Deccan army we appoint.  
Thus all our sons we with due powers anoint,  
Able to rule and honourably live,  
In mutual love and virtue as now they thrive.

Aurungzebe

My king's commands, all weighty though they be,  
Must rule me in their sweetest sanctity.

Shah Jehan

This is most choicely said—in sanctity.  
Your acts avouch your heart's sincerity!  
Haste to the banquet spread in your farewell.  
After, in private conference, we'll tell  
Each fully what each best befits in duty,  
To cherish our love and add to your souls' beauty.  
All lords and noblemen to the feast repair:  
Musicians play; bring the best damsels there! (*Exeunt*).

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ACT IV

SCENE 1—AGRA.

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The marble porch overlooking the *Machi Tawan*.

*Enter Shah Jehan, lords, nobles, and attendants with fishing tackle. They fish.*

Shah Jehan

This is the strangest hap of all I know.  
I cannot bait to-day.

1st lord

Here glides one slow.

It will not bite.....It goes to your majesty.

Shah Jehan

Hush! Even fish have hearing.....Come to me! (*draws*).  
Swish! That's the end. Each time I draw, a swish!  
They hover, and nibble, and caper—but never a fish!  
This wears my virtue: has your patience aught?

2nd lord

They mere but gambol, and will not be caught.

Shah Jehan

An omen's in this sport!.....But stars!—what's this?—

*Enter Aurungzebe.*

Aurungzebe comes to change your spite to bliss!

Aurungzebe

God guard my Emperor!

Shah Jehan

Aurungzebe, hail!

Aurungzebe

Hail, honoured father : noblemen all, hail!

Shah Jehan

How sudden yet sweet's your visit. Have you news?

Still wears your face your soul's most pious hues?

Smile! Open your heart. How fares your world, pray tell?

Aurungzebe

The wicked world, my father, prospers well:

The grace of *Allah* yet preserve us all.

'Tis duty bids me pay thee, sire, this call,

Since love, in absence from the loved that cheers,

Pines in the separation of long years.

Shah Jehan

Most reverent of sons! Remain yet so:

Ritening your manhood, let your love so grow.

Come, dip with us; conquer these tricksters' wiles:

Show us your skill whose patience groaning flies.

Aurungzebe

The pool teems with a hundred ambling fish.

Shah Jehan

Ah, here it is again—another swish!

Aurungzebe

I think to take this one... (*Draws a herring*).

1st lord

O skillful hand!

Shah Jehan

A herring! The water-king dethroned on land!

The empire of the pool is yours, my son:

So are you prince and emperor in one.

Aurungzebe

'Tis but the angler's craft to conquer so:

He baits and waits, then captures sure, if slow!

Shah Jehan

The sport stales in Aurungzebe's victory:

Hide we our heads for shame in his glory,

That thus we triumph, though our lines depress,

And draw our joy from Aurungzebe's success.

Aurungzebe

How fare our Queen, our brother, our sister—well?

Shah Jehan

All happy, son; in love and honour well.

Aurungzebe

How is it Dara shuns this royal sport?

Shah Jehan

He loves his letters, things of state and court :  
I find him wondrous wise, Aurungzebe—indeed,  
Of every kingly promise he bears the seed.

Aurungzebe

*Allah* be praised, and angels bless the boy,  
Who to his parent is such source of joy!

Shah Jehan

We love your gracious sentiments, my son.  
You have a place as near our heart's high throne.  
We would that Murad and Shujah, in this.  
So spake and felt—then perfect were our bliss.  
But they are given to base contumelies,  
And tear each other's love in jealousies.  
What do they hope to gain with bitterness?  
If they lose love they purchase wretchedness.

Aurungzebe

They view our brother Dara's favour ill.

Shah Jehan

Were they both mighty, I'd favour him still.  
Is aught, my son, amiss if Good's caressed?

Aurungzebe

Virtue that blesses ever must be blest!

Shah Jehan

So speaks a royal heart, in royal tone.  
Do you, Aurungzebe, seek your father's throne?

Aurungzebe

God knows I'd rather breathe in books and prayer,  
Than, being unworthy, sigh o'er an empire's care.  
The world would much mistake me if they doubt,  
Though the kingdom of Heaven is seldom by princes  
sought.

Shah Jehan

Most saintly soul to breathe such holy breath.  
If your brothers seek the crown, they seek their death!  
Fie on their clamourous claims who against love war!  
When I am gone, Dara shall be Emperor!

Enter a Courtier

We listen ; speak !

Courtier

All hail ! Your majesty,  
The queen is seized with sudden malady.

Shah Jehan

The birth ! Aurungzebe, follow after me.  
*Allah* to mother and child show *Allah's* mercy!

(Exit Shah Jehan).

Aurungzebe

(To nobles). How goes our life at court, my friends ?

1st Noble

Prince, passing glad,  
Though still for Asaf and Mohabet our hearts are clad  
With blackest woe, and pity for Jehanghir's Queen.

Aurungzebe

I knew of these misfortunes ; and my love hath been  
As poisoned as your joy. Pray, lead the way.  
*Allah* be kind to Empress and babe this day !

(Excunt nobles, &c.)

If *Allah* curse them both, he will be kind,  
For queens breed princes ! Well said, self-accusant mind !  
As many vices as in Catiline  
Damned his poor soul, and plagued the Palatine,  
So many Catilines abide in me ;  
Built, as I am, not on his devilry,  
But all his various cunning. On that part  
Of that in pious hero grows my heart,  
Perfecting every artificial flower  
After the patterns that bloom in Virtue's bower,  
To serve my end. Speak, wag of Sicily,  
And charm us with your epic homily—

\* Watch and distrust : these nerves are of the mind”  
Thanks Epicharmus ; we have proved you kind !

In the house of Akbar, faith is policy.  
 Kings try its truth with reasons's chemistry,  
 But leave its laws to subjects of their sway—  
 The lords and peoples—who worship and obey.  
 Yet the nation hates me, while the nobles love:  
 These would, not these, a king with thoughts above!  
 I know not Heaven, but I would rule the earth.  
 My army's best. I've promise and princely worth:  
 And I, not Dara, shall be Emperor!  
 Nay, brother, not ere our fortunes meet in war.  
 I know well what I am: and King I'll be!  
 So help me Hell, and Hell's hypocrisy! (*Exit*).

---

SCENE 2.—Agra

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The *Moti Masjid* or 'pearl mosque' in the Fort.  
 Arjunaud's body in state. Koran being sung. Hired  
 mourners beating their breasts. Lords, ladies, &c.,  
 in a circle round the bier.

*Enter Shah Jehan in deep mourning. Silence reigns.*  
*Shah Jehan signs to lords, ladies, &c., who retire, and*  
*seats himself by the bier.*

Shah Jehan

Open, proud heavens, for all hath ceased to be!  
 Earth is no more; and gone is human glory.  
 The sun hath vanished in the dying sky:  
 Fame, Virtue, and Beauty in one tomb now lie.  
 No more doth pulse creation. All is cold.  
 You only live, O heavens, and silence untold!

\* \* \* \*

What mockery was this? It was, alas, a dream!  
 The moon shed gold from high: the stars like jewels  
 did gleam;  
 And the pearly dews of heaven fell quivering in their  
 light:  
 Soon burst the dawn, and the great day was bright;  
 Nature blest man; and all things seemed to smile.  
 Then, Arjunaud lived, and ruled this world the while!



But now the air is stagnant. All is cold.  
 Crumble, thou "pearl mosque"! Thou art an aeon old!

\* \* \* \*

I think I live—that Shah Jehan is still  
 Lord of a mighty land, plain mountain and rill;  
 That millions bend to my majesty and pride,  
 And spoil and splendour blaze o'er my beaming bride!  
 But all the world is empty. All is cold.  
 I am a myth! That empire was of old!

\* \* \* \*

Queen, that once graced the glorious universe,  
 And parting, withered it with one fell curse,  
 Reign in the eternal kingdom of the skies,  
 Sole empress of the seraphs' destinies!  
 Allah in His empire hath given thee sway  
 O'er all his angel-hoofs for aye and aye.  
 So reign and rule: so shine, illustrious Queen—  
 To think that thou hast crushed what once had been!

\* \* \* \*

Open proud heavens, for all hath ceased to be!  
 Earth is no more; and gone is human glory.  
 This is mere nothing! And this! All is cold.  
 You only live, O heavens, and silence untold!

*Tableau—Koran—Mourning.*

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### SCENE 3.—AGRA.

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The Jasmine Tower.

*Enter Shah Jehan passing to the balcony in front. The  
 Jumna and Toj, at dawn, in view. Rose water foun-  
 tains visible on the other side of the royal bed-chamber.*

Shah Jehan

Lone, from the couch that once a Queen did grace  
 I turn, to gaze on Dawn's sweet virgin face.....  
 No sleep hath touched these royal eyes this night;  
 Yet lo, in the orient buds the lily of light.....  
 The sun-god bursts the barriers of the east,  
 And travelled from the nether dimming west,

Merges to man, doffing the yoke of night;  
Riding round him his courtier train or light,  
He slays the stars that o'er earth, sea, and sky—  
His triple realm—he rule unrivalled on high;  
Then sheds, in alms to exiled human-kind,  
Day's glory in the gold-mohur moon behind...  
Already morn! O, would the lamp of hope  
Could dawn where souls like mine in darkness grope,  
Viewing strange phantoms in its spell-bound air,  
And rocking on an ocean of despair!  
Vague childish fears, to fright an Emperor,  
Avant! Such maudlin quakes great minds abhor.....  
The power of kings! The paradox is trite.  
Kings have no power: they borrow all their might.  
O'er Egypt, Greece and Rome when great kings reigned,  
They shone like suns; like moons, alas, they waned:  
But prouder than all the Pharaohs', greater still  
Than all the Cæsars' and Herods', aspired my will!  
I thought to eclipse their splendour and renown;  
O'er-reach their valour and wisdom with mine own;  
All Pompey's cities and millions to out-vie;  
Or in the attempt to labour and to die:  
And o'er them plant my name. matchless in fame;  
Since man must die, to live always my name!  
For what is life if it triumph not in death,  
And what is fame, if it end but with man's breath?  
On the life of man th re shine, with the law of the skies,  
The sun of truth that breeds and beautifies,  
The fickle moon of varying fortunes and fates,  
And the stars of virtue lam ing Heaven's gates,  
While over all, in space, lurks destiny,  
That keeps from each, that is, what is to be:  
And all this air is filled with human souls.  
Through error and ignorance to reach their goals.  
But what arch-magician, with powers of hell,  
Hath cast o'er man this potent, evil spell  
That all his hopes and high ambitions tend  
To scorn sun, moon, and stars—his days to end  
In the dark dungeons of doubt and caverns of crime?  
Mysterious madness unravelled yet by time!

A perfect man—and perfect men may be—  
Is he who breaks that spell of devilry,  
And conquering pride and passion, that drive men mad,  
Can truly say :—" I am good, great and glad."  
A soul whose hopes are pure, a lettered mind,  
And happy heart, ennoble human kind.  
What can a man claim in himself but these?  
The rest is nature's, given him but by lease.  
And of this race am I. O, would I were  
A better man, a greater, and freer from care!  
Yet to my kingdom I've atoned my crimes,  
By works that bear my glory to future times.  
Ah, what a glory canopies the Taj!  
More beauteous than I built thee, thou bloomest, O Taj!  
Day's wondrous orb, conjuring with cloud and light,  
Spreads fairy tints o'er thee, most gorgeous sight!  
Radiant river! A heaven of burning stars  
Wounds they mercurial waves with never-healing scars!  
Ah, this it is to be a king, indeed.—  
To feel arts's pride by nature glorified!  
I bless my father and mother that gave me birth  
To gladden and glorify this part of earth.  
And I have built this city with my name  
To pay my bride the promise of her fame!  
Royal Arjumand, still Queen, rest where you lie :  
Your love and mine are pledged to eternity !...  
But even fame's not all : man must have faith—  
Religion's the only hope, man's poor soul hath.  
What is it man most prizes? Is it wealth;  
His power o'er all the globe; or is it health;  
Or that the laws of God he thinks he hath unfurled,  
And properties of all things growing in God's world?  
That he can peer the marvels of the skies,  
And with his pen multiply mysteries?  
Or grace a throne, and rule a realm, as I?  
No, none of these out reach his destiny.  
What is our wisdom? That the dead were wise :  
And from the tomb the dead shall one day rise.  
Treasure and sinews waste; courts, conquests wane :  
Power and pleasure are but in man's brain,

'Tis nature's sermon--ay, that sacred thought—  
All dies that lives : the undying soul God wrought.  
A God above, and life beyond, it is.  
The quality of creeds affects not this;  
And yet, though strangely different are creeds,  
God judges man's convictions by man's deeds!  
Moghul and Christian all alike shall be  
Damned by their falsehood, blessed by honesty.  
Some reason with their faith—seek God with breath :  
The essence of all reasoning is death!  
Our acts are travellers to Heaven and Hell :  
On earth rests nature that knows not "ill" nor "well".  
All good transudes the air and heavenward hies  
So still, no eye observes it where it lies.  
Its golden ray, like the arrow eased from string,  
Shoots far beyond the stars, with subtle spring,  
Pierces the gates, and falls in paradise,  
At *Allah's* feet, to glad the prophet's eyes :  
Then saints rejoice and angels think of men ;  
The Recorder opes his book and stirs his pen.  
But different is the tour of evil deeds.  
Crash, as the cannon whose missile nought impedes,  
It thunders through the world, and its report  
Cracks every human ear in hut and court :  
Then low descends, reverberating down to hell,  
To tune the hearts of fiends with its all-dismal peal,  
And wakes the devil to mischief—in that scene  
Of horrid glare and venom'd vapours unclean.  
Ah me, ah me, after this peace of years,  
An avalanche of woe to rouse my fears !  
Full twenty summers, peace reigned o'er this land  
And prosperity held peace's loving hand.  
How languished I for a theatre of war,  
That Orion like I shone Ind's Emperor,  
But stifled this passion for my country's sake.  
To prosper it in peace and mightier make.  
Die now, tranquillity ! And at the hand  
Of sons, die, honour ! Perish, the pride of the land !  
My sons grown great princes now bear their state  
So troubled with jealousy of each one's fate,

I fear their rising amongst themselves in arms  
 May engender mutiny and like alarms.  
 If they revolt, what troubles shall arise  
 To crown my miseries and dethrone mine eyes  
 In death! Mohabet and Asaf slumber in their graves,  
 And gone with them along, too, are full many braves.  
 Alone, in all the world—an Emperor, alone!  
 My royalty, my sons' dissension! Grieved heart, groan!  
 Infected so, how may I hope to live?  
 Can kings their sons' invasion e'er survive?  
 Already are their hearts to ice-bergs grown.  
 Aurungzebe yet remains a duteous son;  
 Dara was ever near our heart—he too:  
 The rest barter their love for pride. Woe! Woe!  
 I feel a numbness seize my heart. O, God! (*Staggers*).  
 Voices! Most timely arrived. Who's there? O, God.  
*Enter Dara and Jehanara to the bed-chamber.*

Dara

Our father's up betimes.

Jehanara

Nay, he hath not slept.

Mark how the sheets their virginity have kept.

(*Pass to the balcony*).

Both

Father!

Shah Jehan

(*Leaning against a pillar*) My children, I am strangely ill!

Dara

Heavens!

Jehanara

Heavens! (*Dara and Jehanara support their father*).

Shah Jehan

Rule, Dara, for me.

Dara

If 'tis your will.

My father, how ail you thus, so suddenly?

Shah Jehan

My heart seems cramped.

Jehanara

O, father, do not die!

Shah Jehan

My child, in kindness, rather wish me dead,  
Than butchered by my sons. Lead me to bed!  
Nature hath paralysed me that my fate  
Produce the pity that in blood's innate.  
Be wise and cautious, son : seek counsel in all.

Jehanara

O, God, he reels!

Dara

Father!

Jehanara

My father!

Shah Jehan

I fall!

*(Swoons in their arms in a paralytic fit. Curtain.)*

SCENE 4.—AGRA.

The Diwan-i-Khas.

*Enter Prince-Regent Dara, mounting the throne, lords,  
nobles, generals, &c, in conclave.*

All

Hail, Shah Belind Akbal!

Dara

Lords, generals, hail!

In this sudden parliament our words wear mail.  
Love speed our royal father's recovery!  
Meantime, as we are bid, reservedly,  
We assume the state's command. Our rebel brothers,  
With envious misdemeanours, and no others,  
Have felled our father. You've seized their papers all?  
1st lord

We have, my lord.

Dara

Their pride must fall.

Their omrahs are exiled?

2nd lord  
They are.  
Dara

Thus well.

And, look ye, none save such who seek their knell  
Shall hold aught in communication with these,  
Their omrahs, or their principalities.  
Murad in Guzerat, perceiving well  
The aims of Shujah, begs Aurungzebe swell  
Their opposition in their unity :  
Aurungzebe hails him as "your majesty",  
Showing in all no rivalry but aid,  
And sighing:—"For thee, Murad, the throne was made",  
Himself professing some more ardent love,  
For study and the kingdom that's above.  
Hast marched our troops as herein ordered?

General

So.

Dara

They little think that all their plans we know.  
Ah, news!

*Enter a courtier.*

How goes it with the kingdom?

Courtier

Hail!

The air is labouring with the germs of bale.  
Assuming that the Emperor be dead—

*Enter Shah Jehan and Jahanara. All rise.*

Dara

Peace, hold thee!—Hail!

Lords, &c.

Hail, Hail!

Shah Jehan

This is well said:—

"The Emperor dead"! How, now! How now, my son!  
Hast thou usurped thy father's tottering throne?

Dara

My royal sire, mount thee—'tis thine own! (*Descends*).

(*Shah Jehan ascends, seating Jehanara to right.*)

Still being thine, fair brow, wear still thy crown!

This, too, I sacredly, unsold, resign. (*Hands sceptre*).

Shah Jehan

Thy father's hand that takes, so blesses thine,

When thou succeed! But how was this now said—

“Assuming that the Emperor be dead”?

Courtier

Your majesty, I broached the news yet virgin

Which thy royal advent stayed.

Shah Jehan

Then, now begin.

Courtier

Upon that rash plea that your majesty's dead,

The rebel princes hither their troops now lead.

Prince Shujah his Bengal corps himself doth man,

Aurangzebe joins Murad—Guzerat joins Deccan.

Dara

This much our secret spies already told:

This news and our action are equally old.

Shah Jehan

Why come your brothers, Dara to contest

Our rock-built peace and stab our royal rest?

Dara

This was the motive of our parliament,

That we might further our acts knowing their intent.

Read these, my father. There glows their sinful aim.

Sons honour parents: these are sons in name.

Three seek one throne.

Shah Jehan

Already? None shall have,

But thou, my chosen heir. To them the grave!

All

Hail, Emperor Shah Jehan! Hail, Shah Belind Akbal!

Hail, Emperor Shah Jehan! Hail, Shah Belind Akbal!

Shah Jehan

(*Reads.*) Murad “the magnificent”

To Dara “the infidel and imposter”.



"Aurungzebe shall speak for us : the usurper on our late father's throne shall be hurled from his seat by the avenging hands of Justice!—Murad".

Aurungzebe "the ascetic"

To Dara, "the gracious".

"Fond brother, I am pledged to Murad's service on holy grounds, the only just grounds for war. Justice, in weighing you both in the balance of right, finds heavier merit in him to wear the crown our dear deceased father hath left in mourning. Give him his due, and you shall suffer no harm. My heart weeps to turn against you; yet am I proud to help Murad, as in duty bound, in a just cause. When all is over—by the grace of *Allah*, I pray it be soon—I shall seek some retirement for prayer, study, and fast. Be wise and surrender, and still love your fond brother—Aurungzebe".

Shujah "the great"

To Dara "the usurper".

"Our father being dead, and you having no greater claim to govern India than we, these are to command you to deliver the royal seal and sceptre, and all the other appurtenances of royalty, unto us—or to meet us in battle. Our troops already move.—Shujah".

Ambition, what a world of crimes is thine!

Empires must wane if self-love so much shine.

The letters we writ your brothers to desist—

Are they not answered?

Dara

This their answers' gist—

"A dead king's seal is feigned".

Shah Jehan

What, forgery!

Dara

E'en so.

Shah Jehan

Prepare to give them battle! He!

Shujah's proud blood, since mixed with Persian kings,  
Will breed a generation of rebellious things!

Dara

Father, our troops are marshalled.

Shah Jehan

Wise son, how?

Dara

Suliman towards Shujah with gun and bow :  
Against the rest the blades of Jeswant Singh—

Shah Jehan

Our Rajput Cavalry?

Dara

E'en so, my king.

At word from us they forthwith did proceed;  
And soon their news our hungry ears should feed.  
How fares your majesty—in better health?

Shah Jehan

Too ill, and yet so well. Dara, not wealth—  
Not all the caverns 'neath seas and dens 'mid earth  
May yield—can mend a broken heart.

Dara

Woe worth,

Woe worth the day!

Jehanara

My father grieve not so. Show cheer

Shah Jehan

I would I could. But lo, whose hasty steps come near?

*Enter a messenger.*

Messenger

Hail, Suliman hard by the Ganges' banks  
Hath all defeated Shujah.

Dara

To Allah thanks!

Shah Jehan

Is Shujah captive?

Messenger

His surrender resteth

On time. In the Monghyr fortress he's invested.

*Enter 2nd Messenger.*

Dara

We scarce dare think or breathe; here comes more news.

Shah Jehan

Explain your fears: your face some mishap rue.

2nd Messenger

Where flows the flying Nerbudda, all hail,  
Brave Joswant's tactics fatefully all fail.

Dara

Hail!

2nd Messenger

Murad and Aurungzebe hither haste,  
By them our troops dispersed and hotly chased.

Shah Jehan

How tales of fate and fortune balancing lie  
Upon two tongues: so trembles my majesty.  
I am dismayed and fretful. To field I must  
Hence, to subdue this revolt most unjust!

Dara

Nay, nay my father; ill, weighed with heavy years,  
On me place now the burden of your fears.

Shah Jehan

My sons up in rebellion! O vengeful stars,  
Seek ye to mind me of my father's wars?  
Spit not your venom into my aged face,  
Where fortune once that smiled yields fate her place!  
Son, we'll abide your counsel. All is yours—  
This kingdom, sceptre, crown, throne, all these powers.  
Bear Suliman word to give Shujah free terms,  
Then turn his arms to crush the victorious worms.  
You, with a hundred thousand horse, await  
Their armies by the Chumbul, in strong state.  
To arms! I shall be by. Send constant news.

*(Exeunt all, except Shah Jehan & Jehanara).*

Some poisoned humour all my soul imbues.

Jehanara, you are alone with fallen me;

Sole comfort you of sinking majesty.

My sun long set, my star grown dim, so now  
My moon doth wane : come then come cruel sorrow!

Jehanara

Be patient, father; all shall yet go well.

Shah Jehan

Ah, child, I fear me. Wrathful heavens, foretell  
Where sits success smiling and crowned to-day—  
Is't here, or o'er the rebel arms? Heavens, say!  
Fond fool! How may the skies to mortals speak?  
We assail its fortified ears in vain. What freak  
Hath changed me? Am I Shah Jehan?

Jehanara

Ay, still.

Shah Jehan

His kingly shadow, daughter, if you will. (*Strikes his head*).

Burst from **these** bonds, ye thoughts that madly ride :  
I have no **strength** to rein you or to guide.

(*Jehanara in tears.*)

Thy mother, child, lies yonder. Soon must I :  
Who can survive the wreck of royalty?

Jehanara

Nay, father, you anticipate too much.

Shah Jehan

Murad, Jehanara, is in temper such,  
That nothing will his purposes arrest  
When once they move. This, living facts attest.  
Aurangzebe's piety I once believed—  
A fool in reason was ne'er more deceived :  
For, on this very count, we gave him charge  
Of our best armies, with resources large.  
Whom the nation disliked, though the nobles loved,  
I gave these weapons, which are now all moved  
Against the giver.

Jehanara

No, matter, father, they shall all relent,  
When all their passion freely hath been spent.

Shah Jehan

No, child. This war wears a forbidding frown :  
I fear I shall be crushed beneath my throne,  
For all old dreams, once idle, live to-day.  
Daughter, you cannot feel the truth I say.  
Present and Past, parents of future states,  
Your virtues and crimes resolve to fortunes and fates!  
Music and letters, poetry and arts,  
You had your guardians in our Moghul hearts.  
What triumphed in the star-student's seven halls,  
And in our father's golden reigns, now crumbling falls.  
And I—how I had striven to triumph still:  
To carry our destiny to Fame's highest hill!  
But Heaven must rule our will, and we obey.  
Our works if not ourselves will live for aye.  
Live Delhi and Agra! Speak for us to Time!  
Of royal minds ye are the blossoms prime.  
Baber and Akbar won your bloody fields;  
While Shah Jehan their glory with beauty shields.  
Lover and builder I may be called, at least—  
Royal lover and builder of the jewelled East!  
These fruits, in peace, of my fatigues in war,  
Crown India Queen of Empires, me King of Emperors!  
This mosque I built to bless your memory,  
As tribute, daughter, to your chastity  
And filial fidelity; the Taj,  
That pearl among mausoleums, pride of Love's Raj,  
From earth's foundations sprung, that shelters my bride;  
And the Peacock Throne, shall tell our royalty's pride.  
So let my sceptre and my sway depart.  
I've blest Queen, daughter, and self: now break, my heart!  
When sons arise to slay their fathers so,  
Emperors must fall and empires sink in woe! (*Exeunt*).

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SCENE 5—AGRA.

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A battlefield near Agra.  
*Enter Aurungzebe—before his tent.*

Aurungzebe

Dara, Murad, and Shujah wearing crowns,  
Each apeing an emperor, titles and frowns ;  
And this poor orphan head—nothing at all!  
*Me miserum!* To eye from the pit-stall  
This comedy of triple r yalty,  
When I might tread the stage of majesty!  
Back, then, to Cæsar's hate and Roman times :  
And witness Cæsar's fate and Roman crimes!

*Enter messenger*

Messenger

The generals wait for you, my lord.

Aurungzebe

They do?

Tell them I'll end their waiting. What news have you?

Messenger

Suliman bidding brave Shujah to Bengal,  
Hither in haste approaches.

Aurungzebe

Blare the battle-call! (*Exit messenger.*)

This is a new annoyance and alarm...

Ay, that should soon avert both—forth, mine arm!

Gold, glitter, and purchase Suliman's troops. Then fol-  
low

All Roman ruin! Earth, ope, many a hollow!

---

The Emperor's tent removed from the field.

*Enter Shah Jehan, Jehanara, nobles, &c.*

Shah Jehan

Crossing the Nerbudda, their force combined,  
They broke the Rajput ranks brave Jeswant lined ;  
And now they march to meet our royal arms,  
'Mid frightful onslaught. See the rebel swarms!  
The battle rages! Fearful is this fight,  
Where might contends its issues against right!  
How all my spirit burns to join the fray...  
I must. Nay, leave me! (*Thrusts the nobles aside*).

Jehanara  
 Father, be ruled.  
 Shah Jehan

Sons may.

Yet, stay ; what was the last ?

Nobles

'Twas spiriting news.

Jehanara

All be the same !

Shah Jehan

Shower, Dragon, your scalding dew's

On sons that hunt an emperor to his grave !

Pour Regel, your grace on Dara, duteous, brave !

Ay, Jehanara, our trusts abide in God.

Who cherishes love and cures hate with His rod.

Here let us sit and pray for Fortune's news.

By Heaven, I'd rather not !

Jehanara

(*Kneels*).

Your daughter sues !

Shah Jehan (*Uncleasps his sword.*)

Rise, loving daughter : down, down there, my blade !

This be the sign that Moghul triumphs fade !

*Drops his sword—Exeunt.*

Dara's Camp, (covered with a powerful line of entrechments—100,000 horse—along the banks of the Chumbul.

*Enter Dara on an elephant (crowned), Shaista Khan, Raj Gopal Singh, Jeswant Singh and other generals, &c., on horseback. (Guns).*

Dara

Since Murad wears the mark of royalty,

Our father wills that we too crowned be.

So we command the approach to Agra here :

So shall our brothers purchase hate too dear !

Lead, generals ! On warriors ! Success is ours !

Shaista Khan

Canon and rifles, pour your deadliest showers ;

Raj Gopal Singh

Fly, arrows—archers, beggar, all your quivers to-day ;

Jeswant Singh

And all who dare your skill, relentless swordsmen, slay!

*(Exeunt—uproar—guns).*

The confederate princes' camp.

*Enter Aurungzebe on horseback ; Murad, (crowned), on an elephant, generals, &c. Guns.*

Aurungzebe

The river is all-guarded. Go, study the inclines !

*(Exeunt generals).*

Murad

Brother, I'll force them with this trusty blade !

Aurungzebe

By that frail hazard their victory were made.

Nay, stain not our most cautious prudence in all :

I'll learn a route, turn them, and seal their fall !

*(Exit Aurungzebe—guns).*

Murad

Nay.....Boom ! Keep up our fire ! Fight, valiants, fight !

Victory must dawn upon this battle's night ! *(Exit—guns).*

Dara's camp.

*Enter Dara and generals.*

Dara

Their firing flags. Generals, what may this mean ?

*Enter a Messenger.*

Messenger

My lord, that is no camp that we have seen,

It bears its semblance only.

Dara

What else more ?

Messenger

Straight through yon pass the enemy now pour,

Making headway to Agra. Lo, they come !



Dara

'Tis Murad, as I live ! Murad, you die ! Sound, drum !  
I'll ne'er forsake our ancient honoured capital,  
Or my dear father ! Right wing, attack ! Murad, you fall !  
(*Pass on*)

Murad's detachment, pitted against Dara's right wing.

*Enter Murad, a general and soldiers.*

Murad

On ! Battle their opposition !

General

Press, smite, fire !

Murad

Dara shall bleed, and mine be the Empire !  
Courage, my soldiers ; the day shall yet be won !  
So persevere !

General

Fight on !

Murad

Resound, each gun. (*They pass on*).

Aurungzebe's detachment against Dara's left wing.

*Enter Aurungzebe, a general and soldiers.*

Aurungzebe

Advance, advance, brave soldiers ! All is ours.

They tremble and wither 'neath our blasting showers :  
(*Soldiers pass on*).

All (*Outside*).

Hurrah !

General

The field is won : the cowards fly !

Aurungzebe

Move on ! Join Murad ! The rest shall so, or die !  
(*Pass on*).

Dara's camp.—Right wing.

*Enter Dara, a general and soldiers.*

Dara

Murad o'ercome, in mortal wounds, escapes!  
 Their ranks are broken to disordered shapes.  
 Proceed to rescue ours! To the other wing!  
 Flash, sabres! Crack, bows; and guns, your thunders ring!  
 (Pass on).

A common field.

*Enter Aurungzebe, generals and soldiers.*

Aurungzebe

The battle's now restored! Dara must fall!  
 Onward, blood-thirsty men, at glory's call!  
 Ravage like tigers of the forest land;  
 Spare none; crush all between your teeth and hands!  
 (Pass on).

*Enter Dara (on an elephant), and a general.*

Dara

How comes not Suliman yet? Why this delay,  
 That feeds our cankerous scruples and dismay?

General

His men are all corrupted; he has fled,  
 And sends this message.

Dara

(*Reads message*). Hence! My mood is red! (*Exit general*).  
*Re-enter Aurungzebe mounted. Dara tosses the message at Aurungzebe.* Read, hell-born son and traitor! Crouch  
 'neath my blade! I'd crown your black soul emperor of  
 Death's shade!

Aurungzebe

Back, back ungracious, fawning, infidel wretch!  
 Devil! You dare Aurungzebe! Here, corpse, stretch!

(*They fight—exit Dara, retreating.*)

Lo, he dismounts! His elephant hath swerved!  
 His generals lose heart: all are unnerved!

*Enter a general.*

General

Hail, hail! They fly!

Aurungzebe

So ends this stubborn fight.  
 The kingdom is before us, stripped of might!

Enter the city! Drums, flourishes, sound!  
 Inform the citizens this is our ground.  
 Drive Dara; force his nobles yield. So fly! (*Exit general*).  
 Now, for the Emperor! Then, majesty!

---

The Emperor's tent.

*Enter Shah Jehan and Jehanara.*

Shah Jehan

With woeful slaughter blood-red is this day.

*Enter Suliman.*

What, on thy quivering lips, Suliman, say?

Suliman

Hail, Aurungzebe's at hand victorious.

Murad is wounded. All inglorious,

My sire and all our troops are forced to fly.

Shah Jehan

God, God! Here let me sink, and sinking die!

Jehanara

How came these misadventures to occur?

What their details?

Suliman

Hail, these I aver.

My father's entrenchments, breeding the enemy's fear

Of bids them falter lest they come too near.

Murad impetuously seeks to force our ranks;

But firm as rocks our men maintain the banks.

Aurungzebe holds him back, and then, alas,

Hustles his army through a treacherous pass;

Swift leaves behind a camp of mimic show

And secret enters, crossing the stream: but lo!

My father, in valour, straight gives battle. Both

The rebel princes part—so my sire doth.

Murad invades one point: my father doth smite,

And Murad falls in wounds, the rest is plight.

Meantime Aurungzebe, with all might and main,

To right the balance of success and bane,

Our other wing defeats. Both restore fight;

My sire dismounts, and all betake to flight.

For—shame eternal to all Hindustan—  
Corrupted were my troops!

Jehanara

O, Suliman!

Suliman

On rush the rebels' re-united force:  
Murad being down, Aurungzebe shapes their course.

Shah Jehan

The dumbness of despair se zed me, the while  
This tale of spite was told. But now, I smile;  
Let come Aurungzebe; let him, if he dare,  
Dethrone his father and dishonour his heir!  
Ah, bitter conscience, kill me not with the thought  
Of how I once against my father fought! (*Desponds*).

Suliman

Come, royal sire. The game is not yet lost.  
Our fortress will withstand a seige's cost.

Shah Jehan

List Suliman. All is done! Bear me to rest.

Jehanara

Take heart.

Suliman

That's best that ends best.

Shah Jehan

Death were best (*Exeunt*).

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ACT V.

SCENE 1 — AGRA

The Diwan-i-Khas.

*Enter Shah Jehan, Jehanara, an officer and a posse of soldiers.*

Shah Jehan

Captain, in ambush post away your men!

Officer

All hail—march on!

Shah Jehan

Be watchful in your den. (*Soldiers exeunt: Officer salutes and exit*).

You saw them, then, and named their father's ire;

Jehanara

I did so faithfully, my royal sire.  
The churlish Murad knew not courtesy.

Shah Jehan

In him look not to find e'en honesty.

Jehanara

Before departing in my palanquin, howe'er,  
I met Aurungzebe. With words exceeding fair  
He led me to his tent, and his remorse  
There vented, and his altered loving course.  
Quoth he :—"This day I'll, at my father's feet,  
Repent my crime and make amends replete."

Shah Jehan

I doubt, Jehanara; but let him come.  
This way, at least, I'll bind him fast at home.

Jehanara

We may expect him hourly.

Shah Jehan

Be it so.

Men dare not sleep when sons become their foe.

*Enter Mahomed*

Mahomed

*(Aside).*—Methinks there lurks suspicion on that brow.  
Now help me, powers of cunning!—

Shah Jehan

How now, how now!

Mahomed

Hail, emperor ! My princely father commends  
His reverence and love.

Shah Jehan

Go, bid him make amends !

Mahomed

He dutifully so intends, my liege.

Shah Jehan

His duty then's this castle to besiege!

Mahomed

Most humble pardon, hail your majesty,  
He seeks but to protest his loyalty.

Shah Jehan

His words can scarce sustain his heavy acts.

Mahomed

In truth, your majesty, I'll make them facts.  
These are his thoughts as loyal as I'm true—  
The guilty being ever timid, he doth sue  
By your royal leave, to but protect his fear,  
Ere his love's avowal, he in his person bear.

Shah Jehan

How so?

Mahomed

Let guards precede his retinue.  
As for the act, I swear to make it true.

Shah Jehan

I will not trust the man who battled his brother :  
Our world's become unsafe for one another.

Mahomed

Your majesty, if such be your desire,  
I'll to my father. Stay I, or retire?

Shah Jehan

Well, we may grant you grace : enter the fort.

Mahomed

All thanks, my lord. I'll in-lead the escort. (*Exit*).

Shah Jehan

I think, Jehanara, all is royal well.  
Aurungzebe shall be captured.

Jehanara

Truth to tell,

I fear Mahomed. Heaven grant we do not fail.

*Re-enter Mahomed, with guard, stationed,*

Shah Jehan

Be entertained within.

Mahomed

Salute!

Guard

All hail!

Shah Jehan

Sweet daughter, give our grandsire welcome.

Jehanara

Sir,

Our cordial welcome.

Mahomed

Nor our thanks differ!

But, emperor and royal aunt, I fain  
Would crave a kindness of your royal twain.

Jehanara

Be cheerful.

Shah Jehan

Speak.

Mahomed

Yonder ensconced, mine eye

Spies the soldiers of your honoured majesty.  
I dare not count this welcome, and must hence,  
Unto my father, save they're moved from thence.

Shah Jehan

You tax our patience, sir. A fault there is,  
Less in our welcome than you, who abuse this.  
We do not love to hear such strange commands.

Mahomed

My lord, I begged a favour—made no demands.  
It please you, grant it. It removes our fear.

Shah Jehan

(*Aside*)—And adds to mine when no one stands me  
near—

We'll try your faith.—And take some other chance.  
A parent's honour hath nature's puissance.—  
Once more we yield. Soldiers, away!

*Enter officer and a posse. of soldiers*

Officer.

March on!

(*Officer and posse exeunt*)

Shah Jehan

They quit the palace: so, we await our son.  
Would that Aurungzebe were as like to prove  
Worthy, himself, of a father's trust and love. (*A noise*).

Shah Jehan

What noise?

Mahomed

My father's retinue arrives.

Shah Jehan

(*Aside*)—So die our fears, and our great joy survives.

Exult, my heart ! Thy freedom is announced !

The rest is well, the pardon once pronounced.—

✱

✱

✱

Mark, on yon sky, the bleeding sunset's glow.

The prince, methinks, his journey makes too slow.

Mahomed

My lord, my father ~~kneels~~ at Akbar's tomb.

Shah Jehan

What ! Jehanara, hear'st the crack of doom ?

Then why not you ?

Mahomed

Grandsire, truth to tell,

I'm here to take charge of this citadel.

Shah Jehan

God cursed the day Aurungzebe was conceived !

Jehanara

I knew, my royal father, we were deceived.

Shah Jehan

What may you mean, Mahomed, by your tone ?

Your insolent words have turned me all to stone.

Mahomed

The Emperor ne'er intended, nor he doth

Visit his father.

Shah Jehan

Emperor, forsooth !

*Rises indignantly, sword in hand : Mahomed gives a signal : enter more troops : Shah Jehan bursts into tears—Exit Mahomed*

Ah, thus am I outwitted by a son !

My pride, my glory, my kingdom's honour gone !

Breathed there ever a fool so barren as I,

Whose blasted wits prevailed on himself to die ?

Did ever a man, all bankrupt in a day,

Forfeit his fortunes in this reckless way ?



Reigned anywhere a king so crushed as I,  
 Who wrecked the substance of his royalty ?  
 Accursed Aurungzebe, hell-ward tread your soul !  
 Long be your life of suffering, plague and dole.  
 Be Love's deluding mirages thy cheer ;  
 Then rot, like carrion, on barren Bikanir.  
 Famines afflict you, rebellion, and remorse !  
 Foul ulcers rage, and rats usurp your corse !  
 Jehanara, weep you with me, my child ?  
 Nay, cease. Where is Mahomed who beguiled  
 His aged grandfather ?

Jehanara

Gone. He comes again.

*Re-enter Mahomed.*

Shah Jehan

Mahomed, saw'st not how these eyes did rain—  
 These age-dimmed, blasted, blinded, burnt-out eyes—  
 And drowned your king, downcast in miseries ?  
 Look, I entreat you. Yours be liberty,  
 My love and pardon, pomp and luxury,  
 Tre sures—nay e'en my kingdom when I die—  
 Save me, but save, this cruel ignominy !  
 Nay, do not falter, Mahomed. Fortune at your feet  
 With love-locked hand, and vapouring her heart's fierce  
 heat,

Trembling awaits a word from her chosen dear.  
 Salute her blushing cheek. Breathe in her ear.  
 Be lord of fortune, who begs to be your bride !  
 And that no dream my painted words provide,  
 Glance on this gem. The *Koh-i-nur* be your dower !  
 Take fortune's hand—take this ! Restore my power !  
 Still do not waver. The bounding moments speed :  
 Arrest this one, a witness to this deed !

Mahomed

(*Aside*)—The prince in me is touched. Hence base-born  
 thing !—

Nay, never, grand-ire, that erst I called my king.  
 'Twere vain indeed for seemly gifts to sue.  
 My father, before his father. I thank you.

The Emperor hath made you captive, sire;  
But still is honour yours. Follow, sire.

Shah Jehan

O Nature, how they insult thee to thy face,  
And tear thy hair, and scorn thee in disgrace!  
I will avenge thy outrage with my breath,  
Blowing athwart this kingdom the plague of death.  
A father's curse go o'er this prosperous land,  
Blight all its acres, force the rivers stand,  
Shiver the mountains; ay, set f rests afire,  
And taint the air, that living sons expire!

Mahomed

Come, sire.

Shah Jehan

Contagion, seize your blood: so you,  
My fate, in irons, yet shall one day rue!  
Here on the fort of Akbar, Shah Jehan a slave!  
To Aurungzebe, and all his progeny, the grave!

Mahomed

We wait for you, grandsire.

Shah Jehan

Since so, an emperor's thanks!

Jehanara

Come, father. There are two prisoners on the Jumna's  
banks!

Shah Jehan

My daughter!—Aurungzebe's royalty  
Is built on crime: so perish his dynasty!  
After this reign of gold and great felicity,  
An Emperor goes to a prison's adversity! (*Exeunt*).

*Enter Murad and Aurungzebe*

Aurungzebe

Now, brother, your royalty begins; for here  
This "chair" is empty.

Murad

Logical but queer!—

(*Aside*)—And how not yours, Aurungzebe? Here are we  
Competitors for unclaimed royalty.

Let's cross our swords, and who survives may ride  
 This chariot of power, pomp and pride.  
 If you command, my sword obeys (*Hand at the hilt*).

Aurungzebe

Brother, nay !

Forbear to slander.

Murad

Nay, Aurungzebe, nay !

I strive in honesty to yield your due.

Aurungzebe

Murad, the Peacock Throne was built for you.  
 There is but one, and that the proudest goal,  
 (I speak of heaven), that draws the human soul :  
 The way thereto is seldom by the throne.

(*Recites*). " *There are seven people whom God will draw  
 under His own shadow, on that day when there will be  
 no other shadow : one, a just king.*"

A just king. King ! Was ever king just ? Name one.

Murad

Then 'tis unkindness, unfraternity,  
 To send me in this wise to hell ! And why,  
 My brother, would you go to heaven alone ?

Aurungzebe

(*Recites*). " *Another who hath employed himself in de-  
 votion from his youth.*"

Murad

My brother to-day equivocal hath grown—  
 He will not have me enter paradise,  
 Nor thither will himself !

Aurungzebe

Open your eyes.

Re-read your *Koran*, and interpret well :  
 None of these seven can be.

Murad

Then all, to hell !

E'en kings and saints ! I pine ; I yield the crown.

Aurungzebe

I will not wear it.

Murad

Then, some beggar's son !

But stay, I shall, and take the chances too :  
Since hell's for every one, I'll reign, pray you .

Aurungzebe

Re-read your *Koran*. Hell is not so cheap.

(*Recites*). "*Verily ye are of an age in which if ye abandon one-tenth of what is ordered you will be ruined. After this a time will come when he, who shall observe one-tenth of what is now ordered, will be redeemed.*"

The time is come, but all mankind's asleep.  
Your way is difficult, mine is not ease ;  
Yet may we both join hands in paradise.

Murad

Enough of these religious riddles ! Ay.  
And thanks for all your service. Let's be gay !  
Dine with me on the morrow so that I  
May all-exalt this rise to royalty.

(*Aside*).—He is a hypocrite, I cannot trust.  
He slaved his father and in prison thrust—  
He says, for brother's love : have sons no love ?  
Will he then spare me ? Hawk, plumed as a dove,  
To-morrow you dine with me—and after, lie  
In the rude languor of captivity !—

Aurungzebe

Ay, ay, my brother, be it even so.  
I will forget my fast for once. (*Aside*).—My foe,  
I know these capers !

Murad

Thanks, I go to arrange.

Adieu, my brother.

Aurungzebe

Murad, adieu ! (*Exit Murad*)  
'Twere strange

Should he believe me. So, to-morrow, then,  
I must be sudden sick, and hale again  
Day after, when that banquet will be o'er.  
Day after that day after, all galore,

I'll have my banquet in return ; and there  
 He shall be, sick or sorry, fresh or fair !  
 Hark, kinsmen, I read the book of each one's fate !  
 'Tis written :—For seeking to be greater than the great.  
 To Dara, an apostate's lingering death ;  
 To Shujah—well, a rebel's ; for Murad's breath  
 Here is prescribed an antidote to deceit ;  
 But it will serve—not to be over-neat,  
 For (let me see) cruelty in Guzerat :  
 And—where's the page ? Ah, I musn't forget that—  
 And Suliman must die by accident,  
 Whate'er we chance to do to him being meant.  
 These destinies done, turn to " the mountain rat,"  
 Mahratta Shivaji, and with many a cat  
 War-hunt him for our royal sport. Ha ! Ha !  
 Blush virgin throne ! I've " settled with papa ! " (*Exit*)

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SCENE 2—AGRA.

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The drawing room of the palace. A banquet laid out.  
*Enter Aurungzebe, Murad (garlanded), lords, ladies,*  
*musicians, dancing girls, &c.*

Aurungzebe

Hail, glorious Murad, Emperor of the East !

All

Hail, Emperor ! Hail !

Murad

All hail !

Aurungzebe

Now to the feast.

Our entertainment shall be royal this day.  
 Blow, pipes ; sound, drums. Lords, ladies, all be gay.  
 Most beauteous damsels, dance. Let wine go round,  
 To pledge the laurels that Murad's brow now bound.

(*Banquet—Music—Dance*)

Murad

We now command the Army, brother.

Aurungzebe

Yes.

When to be crowned ?

Murad

To-morrow, I confess (*Wine*).

Aurungzebe

I pledge you, Murad, as a brother should.

Murad

And not, I hope, Aurungzebe, as brothers would.

Aurungzebe

Nay, nay, my heart is honest yet, in this;

For, aiding you is adding to my bliss.

Murad

Thanks. Are you bent on Mecca ?

Aurungzebe

So am I.

Murad

Your preparations well may conquer Arabia—

I'd said, if you'd not e'er protested, India !

You journey shortly ?

Aurungzebe

Yea, the time is nigh.

Murad

Heaven's choicest blessings on your sanctity !

Aurungzebe

And sweet success crown your new majesty !

Aurungzebe

(*Aside*). Lady, use all your potent charms on him,

And lighting his senses with love, with wine bedim.

Our favours shall be yours, seek what you may :

Dancing girl

(*Aside*).—Then may I marry yonder lord.

Aurungzebe

(*Aside*).

As you say.

Dancing girl

(*Aside*).—Praised be your bounty, lord. Your will is done.

Aurungzebe

(*Aside*).—A merry ruse ! Business and pleasure in one.—

Ah, nobles, was there ever such a scene ?

1st Noble

This scene is great, my lord.

Aurungzebe

What doth he mean?

2nd Noble

He not denies, my lord.

Aurungzebe

Yet not agrees.

Where was the equal of these festivities,  
I charge you, on your faith and honesty.

1st Noble

Then may I be bold, my lord : 'twas at Delhi.

Aurungzebe

The occasion ?

1st Noble

Your proud father's anniversary.

2nd Noble

His silver wedding.

1st Noble

Never before did I see;

Nor any visioned man in any age could—

Aurungzebe

Stay!

I know the rest. (*Aside*).—Hence, meddling conscience,  
away!

Ho, there! Some wine. O'erflow the goblet—so.

(*Aside*).—Now sink, my thoughts!—Ah, Murad, why so  
low?

What drug holds you half sleepy and half sad?

Murad

Er-er-'runglebe, this wanton drives me mad.

Aurungzebe

Love then's your sorrow, sleep, and lunacy!

Murad

Er-er-my sorrow's my lunacy—er, what?

My lunacy's my sorrow—nay, I've forgot.

Aurungzebe

You are his sickness and physician too:

Now cure him, weach. Prosper, Murad. Adieu!

(*Banquet ends—Aurungzebe withdraws*).

Murad

There never was a lover yet more true.

Er-er.

Girl

More wine?

Murad

Thanks, thanks, my dainty shrew.

Girl

Here wine, my lad.

Murad

Er-charmer, here's to you

You frivolous, mocking, girls are ever thus :

When full as barrels then you most like us.

But you're the flower of this rosy land.

I covet your love : give me your willing hand.

Girl

Nay, here we may not marry, only love.

Murad

Love to the devil ! I'd be in heaven above.

Girl

My lord, you seem more fit for an earthly bed.

Murad

Er-bed ; yes, bed : on your bosom lay my head.

Girl

Not here, my lord. My lord, my lord, not here.

Murad

Then where you will, you tempting, devilish dear.

*(Exeunt Murad and dancing girl).*

Aurungzebe

Now is my lord top heavy with love and sleep.

1st Noble

He rests within secure.

2nd Noble

He hath drunk deep.

Aurungzebe

Enter you now : the hour is ripe.

1st Noble

Indeed.



2nd Noble

We go.

Aurungzebe

Use every caution in the deed (*Exeunt nobles*).

Murad, awake, and learn, Aurungzebe never sleeps

Until the harvest is all gathered that he reaps !

Here come these courtezans to arrest my thoughts ;

Stars to good conscience, and to ill, foul blots !—

Divinities of earth, how goes your sport?

1st lady

As prime as all the splendour of this court.

And yours, my lord ?

Aurungzebe

As well.

2nd lady

Yet you seem sad !

Aurungzebe

All men are so when love may not be had.

1st lady

That princes never lack.

Aurungzebe

The pious do.

Ladies, one moment's grace.

2nd lady

No more, for you (*Aurungzebe removes*).

Aurungzebe

(*Aside*).—He 'wakes, and struggles, raves, and cries "my sword".

That weapon's won, my brother—Hark, a word.

He has no choice but death : let him desist.

Bind him, I say. Despatch, if he resist ! (*Returns*).—

Ah, angels, your company is ever most sweet.

1st lady

When Aurungzebe flatters, flattery's a feat.

Aurungzebe

Once more your pardon, ladies, brief a while. (*Removes*).

1st lady

His manner conjures.

2nd lady

His heart is full of guile.

*Re-enter nobles and dancing girl.*

1st Noble

My lord, your wishes are in all obeyed.

2nd Noble

The prince in bed your prisoner is made.

Aurungzebe

Done deftly. Let him lie.

1st Noble

You saw, my lord

How he did strain the captivating cord. (*Receives jewels*).

All thanks, my lord,

Dancing girl

His tongue was very loose.

Aurungzebe

A pity words against deeds are so profuse.

Maid, your reward : noble, receive your fee !

2nd Noble

Jove's thunder-bolt ! What, this ? Matrimony ?

Who marries is a valiant man indeed.

Dancing Girl

Come on, my lord.

2nd Noble

Come, fortune, or fate ! God-speed !

Aurungzebe

Remove the tables : break we up our court.

Lords, ladies, all, let us adjourn our sport.

(*Exit all but Aurungzebe*).

Now, to my coronation ! The toss is won :

A spell on the peoples, and the game is done,

I'll blush before the crown, the lords shall sigh—

And shunning first, I'll wear it by and by.

So limping Richard did : So do I now.

Hail, Modesty ! A crown circle thy brow !

Prance, royal feet, to Delhi ! Prance, feet, prance !

Snap, royal digits ! Lend time to the dance !

Here is no monarch. Murad bound ; the rest all fled.

Rise, then, imperial umbrella, o'er my head.

*Enter Shujah.*

Shujah

(*Aside*)—What banquetting and dancing! Ha, I see!—  
Ho! Ho! Aurungzebe!

Aurungzebe

Shujah! Can it be?

Shujah

It can with much less wonder than a saint  
Indulge in so much gaiety. Your paint,  
'Twould seem, hath washed. Now listen, Alungir;  
You are a hypocrite, man well may fear,  
But none might trust, much less your elder brother.  
I know my father's fate and Murad's—

Aurungzebe

Brother—

Shujah

Nay, Satan, you protest in vain, I see  
What you may have in store likewise for me.

Aurungzebe

Must you persist in libel? No such thing!  
My father rules: 'tis Murad apes the king.

Shujah

Hell's foremost liar! 'Tis Aurungzebe rules:  
The rest are prisoners, or Aurungzebe's tools!

Aurungzebe

Is that so? Well, then why not Shujah too?

(*Aurungzebe claps and goes. He enters.*)

Shujah (*striking*)

But not before Alungir gets his due!

Aurungzebe (*parrying*)

Arrest this rebel! (*Shujah is arrested*).

And charge him with his crime!

(*Shujah is borne away.*)

Fools are soon trapped. Dance, feet, a second time!

(*Exit.*)

## SCENE 3.—AGRA.

The prison of Shah Jehan.

*Enter Shah Jehan and Jehanara,*

Shah Jehan

Daughter, what are those sounds of welcome? See!  
But stay!—(*Aside*)—Perchance the head of Dara be  
Exposed to public view! (*Paces the room*).

Jehanara

The populace  
Hail their new Emperor with beaming face,  
Piercing with shouts the air that groans in wounds.

Shah Jehan

Unchanged with masters is the bark of hounds.  
The robber may have his dogs: the dogs stand by.  
If he but stuff them, they'll tear e'en honesty.  
Daughter, the universe is reared on law:  
The great attracts the small—ripe power, the raw.

Jehanara

Forego this melancholy, sire.

Shah Jehan

Ah, no!

The seed of sorrow cannot be cast out so.  
Deep in the human heart its roots outspread;  
Its juice flows in the blood from end to head;  
Its humours multiply and rot the frame.  
Life's physician is Death—cure is Death's claim.

Jehanara

Patience, my father. The desert is made bright  
When the darkest sky gives way to coming light.

Shah Jehan

These clouds will die with the sunset of my day.

(*Sees the figure of a crown above*)

Take away that mocking bauble! Nay, but nay.  
That act would mean Aurungzebe's right to own!  
The new Emperor, Jehanara, mounts the throne  
Too prematurely. He should also add  
The murder of a father, by him made sad,

To the other crimes that raise him up so high.  
 O pinnacle of pride, that seeks the sky,  
 Heaven's lightning, thee, with sweeping sword shall fell,  
 And thunders hurl thy Babel down to hell !

*Enter Mahomed.*

Why dares the usurper's son this interview ?  
 On what new pretext, what new crime to pursue ?

Mahomed

To state the reasons of his father—

Shah Jehan

Begone !

Many an Emperor was deposed by his son ;  
 But it was left to Aurungzebe to insult  
 The misfortunes of a father. The result  
 Issued from his ambition : what motive else had he,  
 Accursed, to rob his parent of his empery ?  
 To list to his excuses were to lend  
 Justice to conduct that he ne'er can mend.  
 Aught more ?

Mahomed

Mine honoured lord, you wear your hate  
 Both in your heart and on your lips of late.

Shah Jehan

E'er in my heart that hate be uppermost !  
 For, to these lips, love's language now is lost !

Mahomed

O, spring in your soul, nature's welled grace,  
 To water your smiles when we look in your face.  
 Banish what was. What is, that bravely bear.  
 Chasten your wrath, and to our prayers give ear.

Shah Jehan

Be brief.

Mahomed

My father fondly doth request  
 For Akbar, Dara's daughter's hand.

Jehanara

Base quest !

Shah Jehan

Never ! The insolence of the villain's tongue

Is rival of his guilt. Be Akbar hung !  
Go tell him so.

Jehanara

Adding this to the rest :  
The lady sheathes a dagger in her breast,  
Willing rather a hundred times to die  
Ere by her father's murderer's son she lie !

Shah Jehan

What seeks the scape-grace else that he'll not gain.

Mahomed

Would you release the jewels ?

Shah Jehan

Lest he seek again,

Say that our hammers are ready to resound,  
And a l the gems to finest dust compound.  
Hence, hence ! We'll hear no more of his demands.  
Let him not beg who an empire now commands !

Mahomed

I will, as pleases my grandsire, away.  
My duty to you both, and love for aye ! (*Exit*).

Shah Jehan

My child, that buried treasure is secure :  
When the Fort's a ruin, look to the "sign of four !"  
Hide here, my secret. Ever along with me.  
I leave behind but this four-figured key,  
That some deserving intellect, skilled in scrutiny,  
May force the treasure with one "open sesame."

Jehanara

How fare these warriors, father, Mahratta and Afghan ?

Shah Jehan

As war men's interests, as clan accurses clan.

*Re-enter Mahomed.*

Shah Jehan

Again to weary us with the imposter's greed?

Mahomed

The king, sire, of your jewels hath no need :  
He prays you keep them and command his own.

Shah Jehan

Ah, so he steals my heart who thieved my throne !

Take these to him which I may use no more,  
 To wear with dignity—add to the score  
 These hundred millions. Fables tell the cost  
 Of all my wealth. These savings be his boast !  
 The griefs of this sore heart, let his renown  
 In part mend, while he wears my bloody crown.  
 Convey these words and trifles—so begone !

*(Hands casket of gems).*

Mahomed

I go, my lord : the treasury I'll move anon.  
 For these royal boons, command your proud grandson.  
*(Exit).*

Shah Jehan

Withal, Jehanara, Aurungzebe's still our son.  
 The pardoning present shades the guilty past :  
 Our power no more, no more our hate may last.

*Enter Bijapur (in disguise).*

Bijapur

I crave, my lord, your leave to enter here.

Shah Jehan

You are welcome, if you prove your person.

Bijapur

I fear.

Shah Jehan

This is my daughter : cast your strangeness off. Your  
 name ?

Bijapur

A most fair princess ! Greeting !

Jehanara

Hail !

Bijapur

I am the same

Who hold chief Shahji in captivity :  
 Believe your eyes. *(Takes off disguise).*

Shah Jehan

Bijapur ? Hail !

Bijapur

E'en he.

Shah Jehan

Your grace must pardon these poor prison walls.

Bijapur

I none the less respect a king that falls.  
 Seeing that one so wise and great as you  
 Honoured me by a letter, in which you rue,  
 For Shivaji, his father's fetters, I  
 Touched by the fate of fallen majesty,  
 Resolved in secret straight to visit you,  
 And beg a boon, in turn for what you sue.  
 My heart, with all proud pleasure, doth accede  
 To what you will of me; but since, indeed,  
 All earthly kingdoms are in jeopardy—  
 Your son's if he change friend to enemy,  
 Or ours if we act hostile—on my part  
 I pledge ~~unto~~ the Moghul realm my heart,  
 And pray your power procure like peace for us.

Shah Jehan

Brave king, Aurungzebe shall be counselled thus.  
 But, mark me, friend: Aurungzebe is a man,  
 Who knows of others, as others of him can,  
 At least as much; speaks less than what he knows;  
 And does more than his best speech ever goes.  
 I thank you ne'er-the-less.

Bijapur

My thanks are due.

*Enter Shivaji (in disguise).*

Shah Jehan

Hail, stranger! If none, say, what friend's in you?

Bijapur

He comes like a thief. His step betrays his guilt.  
 Can'st thou not speak?

Shivaji

Speed, blade! Deep, to the hilt! (*Attacks Bijapur*).

Shah Jehan

Avaunt!

Bijapur

You miscreant! Stand! Give your name!



Shivaji

(Unmasks). This face shall tell ! The son you so defame  
Whose sire you coop in chains ! Aim !

Shah Jehan

Nay, but stay !

Or if you duel, my guest's debt I shall pay.  
Scarce hath the noble Bijapur's disguise  
Made good his secret, but forthwith all our eyes  
Are struck with this new wonder. Here are ye,  
Each's rival, before imprisoned royalty.  
Raise not your hand to strike a noble foe :  
Your ears shall tutored be, what makes him so:  
He hath unchained your father in his consent.

Shivaji

My lord, I thank you. King, I do repent.

Bijapur

I trust in a great man's sincerity.

Shah Jehan

Royal exchange of magnanimity !  
My worthy Bijapur, in Shivaji  
Burns all the pure fire of filia'ty—  
I would all sons were so. Now we are friends,  
All three, my humble home shall make amends  
For differences past, in present accord.

Bijapur

Your generosity's e'er royal, my lord.

Shivaji

You are more kind, than I am worthy here.

Shah Jehan

You, Shivaji, will have a brave career.  
Hear me. Be you as mighty as renowned,  
But cautious; learn from a head once crowned,  
And, by your gods, abjure contention. See  
How low may stoop contention's roya'ty  
That mocks a parent with these fetters : or  
How high may royalty's contention soar,  
That bears a son exultant and immune  
To these hell-earning honours !

Shivaji

Alas, too soon !

My sad concern in all your griefs, and love  
For your majestic counsel, may time prove.  
Proud as the Moghul ally, so made by you,  
I hope to seem by circumstance as true.  
Hast heard, my liege, I've lost man's favour ?

Shah Jehan

How ?

Shivaji

Since my blood is mingled—part royal with part low.

Shah Jehan

What shame's in that ? In royal and in low  
'Tis the same living human blood doth flow.  
Nature but owns one royalty—the soul—  
Whose purple properties tinge the human whole.  
Two souls may differ, and two minds, two hearts,  
But ne'er two human veins. The bar that parts  
A man from men is that surpassing test,  
Virtue, for who is virtuous is the best.  
Wide, like a strolling serpent the Jumna flows ;  
Basks in the sun when burning summer glows,  
Its scales all still ; when the waters of the skies  
Fill its vast gaping mouth, slowly doth rise ;  
Then glides, and onward sweeps, from end to end  
Wriggling along with many a majestic bend,  
O'er its great hollow-bed, until at last  
Into the royal Ganges rushing past  
Headlong it plunges and's for ever lost.  
The power of creation each had cost ;  
And though their waters mingle with the profane flood  
Of a hundred streams, both are holy : so 'tis with blood.  
So life proceeds, the surge with mystic source,  
Tumbling from heights unknown—its primal force  
Hid in the weird gorges of the enchanting past ;  
Its end, mysterious Future's ocean-vast !  
Turn back each tributary of human blood,  
And all return to one common giant flood.

'Tis but the long-drawn distance from the parent flow  
 Engenders plebeian and patrician—high and low ;  
 Thus ignorance alone doth blood revile.  
 Are streams all rivers ? Is each river a Nile ?  
 Nay, there's no blood-drop purer in me than you :  
 No man's a mongrel, since every man is true.  
 What warrior ! Lost man's favour and therefore sad ?  
 I'd rather gain a woman's and go mad.  
 Jehanara, be gracious to our guests.

Jehanara

We ever are the soul of your behests. .

Shivaji

With thy sweet soul no sin could bide in wish of mine !

Bijapur

What could I ever lack with courtesy so divine !

Shah Jehan

A royal chamber were more meet for royal cheer ;  
 But let our hearts expand the space we beggar here.

*Curtain*

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SCENE 4.—AGRA.

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Preliminary shifting scenes :—

1—The Prison-chamber.

*Shah Jehan discovered reclining in a chair, Jehanara  
 by his side, tending.*

Shah Jehan

Daughter, they do not grant my dying wish.

*Enter doolie-bearers with a dowlah.*

Jehanara

They do,

Shah Jehan

*(Transferred to the dowlah).*

At last ! Adieu my "pearl-mosque" ! *(They move on).*

My prison, adieu ! Adieu ! *(Exeunt).*

---

2—The Diwan-i-am, or public hall of audience.

*Enter Shah Jehan borne in the dowlah, Jehanara following by his side—en passant*

Shah Jehan

My court, why empty ? I still live. Re-echo vault,  
My old decrees of justice and of mercy ! Hail !  
Where are my peoples that I loved, can'st tell ?  
Not one to heave a sigh or lower his head ? Ah, well !

*Makes a sign to proceed. Exeunt.*

3—The marble porch overhanging the *Machi Bawan*.

*Enter all as before.*

Shah Jehan

I, Aurungzebe's "herring," cast this dying glance to my  
sea.

Waters, receive this tear, and breed more tears for me!  
*(Exeunt).*

4—The Diwan-i-khas, or private hall of audience.

*Enter all as before.*

Disconsolate, my throne ! Mourning, my sceptre and  
crown !

Then I shall rule one moment longer. Nay, I own  
I have no strength to rise. Yet, wait : permit me this.  
Scenes of my power, and symbols of majestic bliss,  
I'll harken to the songs of memories still young...  
Ay, now proceed ; my melting heart is sorely wrong.  
*(They move on).* Be shred, my jewel-feathered nest ! My  
throne, adieu !

Sceptre and crown, melt with my grief ! Adieu, adieu !  
*(Exeunt).*

5—The Jasmine Tower.

*Enter all as before*

Shah Jehan

Rare, rounded tower your monarch once reposed in you.  
Preserve your wonders for his future fame : Adieu !  
*(Exeunt).*

## 6—The Drawing-room.

*Enter all as before*

Shah Jehan

Ah, court of royal revelry, I go. Adieu !

My fountains and my flowers, my world, my all, adieu !

*(Exeunt).*

## The Pavilion of Death.

*Enter all as before. Shah Jehan is transferred to a sofa and reclines, Jehanara kneeling by his side. The dowlah is removed. Exit doolie-bearers.*

Shah Jehan

What bitter jests hath Fate, Jehanara ! I

Who illumed this vast empire, a prisoner die—

An out-cast king, for chroniclers to deride—

In the sight of all my glory and my pride !

Deceived, desceptred, immured eight weary years,

That mocked my miseries and turned me all to tears !

And here I end both all my joy and woe.

Now flies my soul : my life-blood ceases to flow.

Jehanara

Father, be sparing of your ebbing breath,

And let me squander mine, to be by you in death.

Alas, your doom is the date of royalty.

Shah Jehan

If you must weep for love, then why not I !...

Hyperion parts the purdahs of the west,

And trailing his shimmering robe, departs a guest

From this to the chamber of the nether world.

He glides. His drugged host sleeps ; his sight's unfurled.

Night, morning ; morn and night—time's mystery !

See what a wondrous vesture clothes the sky !

Gold where it sets, vermillion in the east :

And lo. the lightning smites, at heaven's behest,

The stainless intervening vault of blue,

As if Allah would sign to me and you !

Strange retrospect and forecast of the skies!  
Gold's for the canopy of glory that dies ;  
Vermillion, the crimes that bled the Moghul crown,  
And all that virgin blue o'erhead, its old renown.

Jehanara

True, 'tis a portent.

Shah Jehan

Jehanara, our day

And all our golden power sets for aye.  
What was its morn? Timur of Tamerlane,  
Baber, Humayun, Akbar, founded this fane  
Of proudest fortune, valour, virtue and worth.  
Oh would the Heavens could once more give them birth!  
Then shone, in the forenoon of Jehanghir's reign,  
This waxing sun, in its all lustrous vein ;  
Next came the noon of all my greatness—and  
It blazed in brilliant might o'er all the land.  
Aurungzebe's power is its afternoon ;  
With his successors the end must come too soon.  
The blood of Tamerlane, that stains the throne,  
Hath shrieked for vengeance against all its own !  
Slow was the rising of our royal sun :  
Swift shall the setting be, so all is done.  
My wonders in jewelled marble at least shall last,  
And in the future ever live my past.  
Shine, glorious Taj! In thee my hopes are laid.  
O had'st thou been as I had wished thee made,  
Thy sister on yonder bank had lived to-day,  
To hold thy hand across this watery way,  
Blest equally with all thy gifts and grace  
And twined to thee by a marble bridged terrace.  
There had my pride been buried, as in thee  
Arjumand's fame. But better both in thee.  
Hast told Aurungzebe, death is imminent?

Jehanara

My dear, fond father, a message hath been sent  
To him : he knows of your enfeebled state.

Shah Jehan

Never could I forgive him for my fate,  
Though darkness shall compel me to forget.

Yet let me part, if not his friend, his father.  
 That I were both, O, how I would the rather !  
 What visions rise before these dimming eyes !  
 Out of his hollowed tomb doth Akbar rise,  
 And sails across the ocean waves of air,  
 To ease my spirit in the world past mortal care.  
 O, royal grandsire, my soul's impatience ease !  
 Farewell, my child ! Sad is this soul's release.  
 Ah, Arjumand, with open arms of love,  
 Come to absorb me ! Bear, O bear me above !

Jehanara

*(In tears).* Oh father ! Sweet father !

Shah Jehan

Farewell ! *(dies).*

Jehanara

*(In sobs).*

Ah, orphan me !

My heart must break with this calamity.  
 Deprived of him in whom my life reposed,  
 My joy on earth by woe's metamorphosed ;  
 He died at last in peace ; but how before  
 Was he not troubled with dreams of bloody war,  
 And avenging spirits ! How, in fear, he knelt,  
 Imploring, as if their presence he had felt,  
 In tears, the souls of Shuriar and Kushru,  
 To pardon him. Greatness is dead ! O woe ! *(Weeps).*

*Enter Shah Alum*

Shah Alum

Hail, aunt ! How fares the old monarch ?

Jehanara

Ripe for the tomb.

Shah Alum

Already dead ! God rest thee ! Sad and sudden doom !

Jehanara

Not dead, but murdered by a rival son—  
 By your own father ; dead, since he seized the throne.  
 O woe, O woe !

Shah Alum

Royal aunt, be you resigned.

Jehanara

How comes not yet Aurungzebe ? Know'st his mind ?

Shah Alum

He dares not to the presence of the dead :

'T would break his heart, o'erstrained with grief.

Jehanara

Ill said !

He broke his father's so.

Shah Alum

Come aunt, be kind :

You are a princess of a noble mind.

Sweeten your breath ; forgive my penitent father.

Jehanara

Ask this cold hand to pardon ! O let him, rather !

(*Rising*). I cannot stem my grief, or stay my tears :

My instinct is alive with strangest fears.

Shah Alum

Let me console you. (*A voice*).

Jehanara

Hush ! (*A voice*).

Shah Alum

That voice !

Jehanara

Horror !

Shah Alum

*Enter Akbar's ghost (laurelled).*

I fear me 'tis some long-dead ancestor !

That face and form were Akbar's !

Jehanara

Lo, see there,

By my father's side he stands ! O, how I fear !

Shah Alum

Spirit of Akbar !

Jehanara

He looks ! *Allah* with us !

Shah Alum

If thou be Akbar, speak, why hover'st thou thus  
In the chamber of newly expired majesty ?



## Ghost

When I drew breath on earth, lived honesty,  
I come to warn you with a prophecy,  
Now that e'en kings become a mockery!  
I am Akbar—the Tiger of Chittore,  
Lion of Paniput, Ind's Emperor!  
The glittering turban and the jewelled crown  
Have yielded to these bays low bending down.  
I come from Sikandra's solitary tomb  
To pierce unwilling ears with a tale of doom;  
To wring your grieving eyes with woes to come,  
And flood with deluge-drops each hearth and home.  
To swell tongues long in lamentation dread,  
More than the Jews did for Josiah dead;  
Or Moghuls for me—for now your million groans,  
Forced from your bloating breasts, for an empire's bones  
Rise through the air and travel to the skies,  
Or on the winds, wing to the seas. This empire dies!  
E'en as Augustus, a babe in the triumphs of Rome,  
Was borne to light to seal the Republic's doom;  
So, when our Moghul glories fired this land  
With golden fame, the sceptre in Selim's hand,  
A hero parted from his mother's womb  
To crush for aye the rule of our own Rome!  
Now doth destruction, such as at Timur's death  
Shivered his dominions, her blade unsheathe!  
Aurangzebe thy father, thou, and all thy race,  
Shall bear, nurse, fruit, the seeds of dire disgrace.  
This realm shall sunder in a hundred bits,  
Convulsed as the earth with its intestine fits;  
And all its fragments pass to warlike hands;  
Its chivalry's seeds flower on severed lands.  
So shall it pine; so all our fame expire,  
Till foreign power gives birth to a new empire!  
Rotten's our sceptre, steeped in royal blood;  
For none rule long except the great and good!  
Justice and virtue alone outstrip Time.  
The hand of heaven reaches each empire's crime.  
Upon our ruins shall Britain build her power,  
Upraise our throne, and high above us tower;

# Jehanara

## Shah Alum

Fear not my aunt: the spirit's no more near.  
The pride and power and pomp of nations, in all their  
sheen,  
All-golden wealth, purple royalty, and, fame full green,  
Are but the garments, rich and gaudy and gay,  
Of blustering man, false peacock of a day.  
Fate, with its angry tooth and tenter-claw,  
Rends at a wrench the beauty of this daw,

And all is lost. The raiment tears to rags,  
 And greatness turns a topic sweet to wags.  
 Fortune stands bowed, all bare, in open shame  
 And nakedness, to please that prudish dame,  
 Opinion : while all the wide world laughs  
 At her, so fallen, reviles,—then Fortune quaffs  
 Her bitterest draught—and spitting, turns away,  
 This is the kingliness of human clay !  
 Hid by her blushes, the world's best pageant show,  
 Palace and kingdom, what avail they now ?  
 They topple as a wreck and are no more :  
 And a wilderness opens, where great winds roar.  
 Pride, in her awe and sorrow, gazes on the ground  
 To view her ruins crumbled all around.  
 Prosperity, changed to affliction, grins,  
 Filling the air with mocking demon dins.  
 Flattery turns traitor, breathing fiery scorn,  
 And Fortune droops and dies, forgot, forlorn.  
 Alas, this picture paints my destiny :  
 My father robbing his father robbed also me,  
 Since Mahomed died, in chains, a bitter death,  
 The prophecy of his departed breath !

Jehanara

Nay, 'tis not one but all our ill-starred race  
 By blood and mutiny our royalty doth efface.  
 The fates of Dara, Murad, Shujah and Suliman,  
 Hunted and slain and huddled in the soil of Hindustan,  
 Are but the evil acts of our heredity :  
 Would that the Heavens had mercy on our dynasty !

Shah Alum

O, history of kings and empires great,  
 When such destruction wrecks you, what a fate !

*(Kneeling by the dead).*

Dead soul of this deserted flesh, once fair,  
 From the region of high heaven, hark to my prayer !  
 When thy famed crown upon my brow shall shine,  
 Let not the curse my father earned be mine.  
 Grant my poor heart's petition, great grandsire !

I plead for him, for me, and for the empire  
Of our belauded ancestors.

Jehanara

Amen !

Shah Alum

Hush ! Was't you, aunt ? O, soul, say thou, amen !

*Tableau.*

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SCENE 5—AGRA.

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The Taj Mahal by moonlight.

*The royal bier is borne in solemn procession, up the marble stairs, across the terrace, through the main entrance of the Taj, down to the tomb. Prince Shah Alum Rajahs, lords, mourners, &c., following.*

*Enter Aurungzebe.*

Aurungzebe

Enter, dead majesty, and sleep in peace,  
Where all thy joys and sorrows ever cease !  
Proud as the Empire is thy royal tomb,  
By the side of her whose love upraised this dome.  
The temples of Jupiter and Jerusalem  
Could in no wise reproach this mausoleum.  
As pure its marble, borne from Jeypore's womb,  
Wall upon wall entire, to light Death's gloom ;  
As proud its each intaglio, rayed by gems—  
Diamonds above the wealth of diadems,  
Sapphires and emeralds to wreck ten thrones ;  
Pearls, jades, and jaspers, agates, copper-stones,  
Cornelians and carbuncles, fired with fumes their own,  
All-vieing with the dripping ruby and congealed blood-stone—

A hundred conflagrations in one flower,  
All a noiseless, endless, pyrotechnic shower !  
Stands one within, his spirit shrinks in impotence  
Before the silent roar of this magnificence.

Light to earth's shadows the Taj Mahal gives,  
 The sunshine augments, and the morning mist relieves.  
 Emperor and Empress, bless us where you lie,  
 And curse not me who wear your royalty !  
 Here in Death's home repose, ye love-bound twain :  
 So consecrated to glory be this fane.  
 Rest, spirits, by the stream that from this stricken city  
 Receives all India's tears ! I weep—for pardon and pity.  
*(Enters the tomb—Koran).*

*Re-enter procession, Prince Shah Alum Rajahs, lords,  
 mourners, &c., and exeunt Re-enter Aurungzebe.*

Aurungzebe

One lingering look, where all is silent now !  
 One thought of love : one meek repentant vow,  
 And I am gone.....*(In prayer).*

Empires on empires may fade,  
 Thou, Taj Mahal, shall bloom till Time's decayed ! *(Exit).*

*Curtain.*

**EPILOGUE.**

High-hearted Emperor ! If pre-possessed  
In praise of him, the great dead we've but blest.  
Better panegyric than base prejudice ;  
And paint ten virtues first, then daub one vice.  
The sciences of Truth judge haughtily,  
But the arts of Fiction touch thou leniently :  
And rhymes on chronicles, being half ideal—  
The mermaid art—scourge not as if all-real.  
A tragedy historical must be—  
First tragedy, and after history.  
This proves our pre-possession. Hence we say :—  
High-hearted Emperor ! Peace, peace for aye !

## CRITIQUES.

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The Reverend S. Boswin, s. j., Professor of English Literature, and Principal, St. Patrick's High School, Karachi, says:—

“The historic drama entitled “ The Emperor Shah Jehan ,” exhibits an uncommon mastery of the subject, in expressive and beautiful poetic diction.....”

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The late Mr. P. Peterson, m. a., Professor, Elphinstone College, Bombay, wrote :—

“The “Tragedy of the Emperor Shah Jehan ” is, I think, the first work of its kind, with a plot from Indian history.....It is exceptionally bright and clever, interesting and educative. In some respects it is a work of genius..... The drama is a masterpiece, and ought to secure a very favourable reception among all classes of English and Indian readers. ”







